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# Middletown U. S. A. All-America City

By  
GEORGE C. CROUT  
M.A., M.E., S. Ed.

Editorial Adviser  
Willfred D. Vorhis

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Middletown Post 218, The American Legion

*Inscribed by the author  
George C. Crout  
Nov. 1939*

Perry Printing Company

Middletown, Ohio

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# All-America City Middletown U. S. A.

By GEORGE C. CROUT

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OTHER WORKS BY THE AUTHOR:

*Where The Ohio Flows*

*Teacher's Guide to Ohio*

*Collection Of Christmas Plays*

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CONTRIBUTOR TO:

*The Crusaders: World War II History*

*William Holmes McGuffey*

*Middletown Journal*

*Special Note by Author:* While footnotes are not included in this book, original manuscripts with complete references are on file at Miami University Library, Oxford, Ohio. Greatly expanded materials on Middletown may be found there under the author's name in the card catalogue. Other local material may be found in manuscript form at the Middletown Library.

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Other local material may be found in manuscripts from the Middleton  
Library.





## DEDICATION

This book is lovingly dedicated to  
my mother,  
Myrtle Williamson Crout,  
the great granddaughter of Miami Valley pioneers.



at both ends (about 1/2 inch apart)

radius 1/2

radius 1/2 (about 1/2 inch apart)

radius 1/2 (about 1/2 inch apart)



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is grateful to the many men and women who helped make this book possible.

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George Crout





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## PREFACE

In western Ohio two rivers wind southward to join the beautiful Ohio River. Since these were so important to the life of the Indian, he used his native word, Miami, meaning mother, in referring to the rivers. The Miami Rivers were, in fact, the mothers of people who lived in the valley thousands of years ago. Today these same rivers still thread their way through the Miami Valley. Almost in the center of this valley, stands a great city, Middletown, Ohio, U.S.A.

This is the story of the rise of that city. Middletown made its first appearance on the maps of Ohio in 1802 as a pioneer river settlement on the east bank of the Great Miami. Before the town was officially platted, pioneers had come to this area, the first one being Daniel Doty.

From its early beginning as a cluster of log cabins to a great city is a story of romance and adventure. It is, in reality, an historical type study of the growth of an average mid-western community. In many ways Middletown is a typical American community, and the same forces which made this town made many other cities in America.

But Middletown, U.S.A. is more than a typical community. It is unusual in many ways—its story is unique. It is a place where people have learned to live together in peace. Labor and management settle their problems around a conference table in mutual trust and understanding. Cooperation and teamwork are practiced in every facet of community life. Many times Middletown has been referred to as Peaceful Valley.

Yes, Middletown, U.S.A. is more than a city—it is a way of life. This brought it the high honor of the official citation as an All-America City. Here is the Middletown Story.



# Explorers Find the Valley



## Before the White Man Settled

To early people the Miami Valley was the main passageway from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. The first settlers of this rich, green valley were the Mound Builders. These men had come into the valley when the great glaciers melted their way northward. They found their way to the heart of the green valley. In Butler County alone, these men of the Stone Age built over 200 mounds and 24 other earthworks.

The Mound Builders selected homes along the Miami River and the streams flowing into it. Where the Mound Builders made their largest settlements, the white man was later to plan towns. These early people built their villages and homes on the broad plains along the river. This was their highway; all transportation was by boat. Boats were made by hollowing out a log, or covering a crude frame with birch bark. The rich, black fertile land of the river bottom became farms. Other early people wished for these lands. To protect themselves against unfriendly people, the Mound Builders constructed forts upon the hilltops.

The Mound Builders were very clever people. They made flint arrows, and tools of copper. Some of their pottery can still be seen. They ground up stone and added shells to the clay to make a pottery that would not easily shrink or crack. Out of rushes and grasses they wove mats. From coarse plant fiber they wove cloth, much like our burlap. With wood, pearls, shells and bones they made bracelets, and beads. At Fort Ancient they developed a way of living that will never be forgotten.

When these people lived on the broad terraces rising from the Miami eastward, no one knows. Perhaps it was ten thousand years ago. For reasons which will never be known these Mound Builders disappeared from the valley.

Another group of people moved into the valley, the Indians. These red men of the forest loved the Great Miami. After living here for many





hundreds of years, they became known as the Miami Indians. They were members of the great group in the west known as the Algonquins. While there were many other tribes in the Ohio country, the Miamis were the bravest and the most powerful. It was the Miami Indians who led the fight to drive out the white man from the Ohio country.

The headquarters of the Miami Indians was at Pickawillany, where the tribe built an Indian village and fort. Celoron, the French commander, buried one of six leaden plates in the Ohio country, at the mouth of the Great Miami. This was to show that the French claimed the Miami Valley. After doing this, Celoron traveled up the Great Miami to Pickawillany in 1749 to talk with the Indian Chief, "Old Britain." His very name shows on which side this Miami chief stood. The French were unable to win his friendship.

In early 1751 Christopher Gist arrived at "Old Britain's" village. He was given a big welcome. At this time Pickawillany was one of the largest Indian villages in the Ohio country. It was here that the Indian trails crossed. About 400 families lived there. From this village the Miami Indians controlled a great empire. It began in the lands west of the Scioto River valley and stretched over to the Fox River in Illinois. From the site of Detroit to the Ohio River the Miami Indians hunted and lived.

The Miami River was the center of their empire. Here on the roomy terraces of the river they planted and harvested their crops. The early prairie land was filled with waving, green grasses, where the buffalo grazed. From the buffalo the Miami Indians took food, clothing and shelter. The animal's body gave good, rich meat which could be eaten fresh or dried for winter. His skin made a fine robe, clothing or tepee cover. Thread was made from the sinews for bowstrings and sewing. Even the bones were used for making useful articles. From the clean, cool waters of the Miami River, the red man took the large, tender fish. The forest in the uplands was the home of the deer, elk, and bear. The swamps were filled with thousands of wild geese and ducks.

As the Indians were pushed west by white man's settlements, the Miami Indians were in danger. Other tribes tried to take their lands from them. The battle for the Miami Valley became very bloody and bitter. It was not the arrows of unfriendly Indians, but the guns of unfriendly white men that the Miami Indians feared most.

In 1669 La Salle had first seen the beautiful Ohio and the blue Miami. In 1749 Celoron claimed the Miami as part of the empire of France. In 1751 came the man the Miami Indians liked best. He was kind Christopher Gist. He did not scare the Indians with his gun, but he carried something far more dangerous. It was a simple pen. With this pen he wrote a description of the Miami Valley. Here are some of the sentences he wrote:

"The land is fine, rich, level, well timbered with large walnut, ash, sugar, and cherry trees. It has a great number of little streams and abounds with turkeys, deer, elk, and buffalo, 30 to 40 of which





may be seen feeding in one meadow. The grass here grows to a great height in the fields. The bottoms are full of clover, wild rye and blue grass."

This report was widely read in the East. It meant to the farmers there that this would be a rich farming country. Among those who read that report was Major Benjamin Stites. Born in New Jersey, he had emigrated to western Pennsylvania. He decided to explore this rich Miami Valley. In 1787 he made his way up the valley to Old Chillicothe. He liked what he saw, and decided to make a settlement.

### **White Settlement Begins**

He went back to Trenton, New Jersey to talk with John Cleves Symmes. Symmes was a lawyer, who was interested in the western lands. Symmes told Major Stites that the land belonged to the national government, and that a title to the land could be obtained only from Congress. He agreed to work with Stites to obtain the Miami lands from Congress when it met at Philadelphia. Major Stites was to organize a group of men to settle the new Miami lands. Symmes promised to let Major Stites have 10,000 acres at the mouth of the Little Miami or as much more as he could afford to buy.

Then an organization of 24 men was formed, which included Stites and Symmes. In August of 1787 Symmes presented a petition to Congress asking for a grant of land. He asked that he be given the same terms as the Ohio Land Company, which had plans for settling the Muskingum Valley. In April 1788, General Rufus Putnam, the Father of Ohio had made the first settlement at Marietta.

In October 1787 his application had been approved, but the contract for the land had not been granted. Nevertheless, Symmes was in a hurry. He sold Stites 10,000 acres of land. Then he advertised his land for sale throughout the state of New Jersey. Land was offered for sale at 67 cents an acre. While Symmes continued his demands on Congress for more and more land, he sold land he did not even own. This was to cause a great deal of trouble in the courts as well as in Congress. Many people in this area had to buy their land twice.

Meanwhile Major Stites had succeeded in getting together a band of men. The settlers assembled, went over the old trails down the Ohio to Limestone, now Maysville, Kentucky. A company of volunteer militia was raised to go in advance of the other settlers. This company which was made up of 60 men, went down the Ohio until they came to the mouth of the Big Miami. In August 1788 they explored the region. They went to what was later called North Bend, near the mouth of the Great Miami. Judge Symmes decided that he would locate his party at North Bend.

During this time Major Stites made preparations for his settlement at the mouth of the Little Miami River, where he planned to build a fort. He and some of his men started to work. They went into the forest and made clapboards, hauled them to the river, and put them on boats. They



even saved the chips to fill in the spaces between the logs. Double plank doors were made for defense.

On November 17, 1788 Major Stites' party left Limestone for their proposed settlement. In all there were 22 young men to defend the pioneers. Before leaving the new site, they had heard from hunters that there were 500 Indians at the mouth of the Little Miami River waiting to stop their settlement. Since the women were very upset over such news, five men went ahead of the party in a canoe. If no Indians were seen, these men were to wave a handkerchief, which was the signal for the company to land.

When they were near the mouth of the Little Miami, the white handkerchief waved in the wind. It was the good sign! As the party rowed across the Ohio, their boats were carried almost three-fourths of a mile down the Ohio. They made their landing at the high bank below the mouth of the river. The date was November 18, 1788, and it marked the first settlement of white man in the Miami Valley. The brave band of pioneers made their landing. Then they placed sentries to watch for the Indians. With this done, they paused to thank God for bringing them safely to a new country. On bended knees they asked Him to protect them on this wild western frontier. When this worship service was over, the pioneers started to build Fort Miami. The group worked so fast and skillfully that before going to bed that evening they had erected a block-house, hung their heavy door, and filled in the cracks between the logs with chips and clay. Now they had protection against the red man. In a month they had completed a strong fort.

After the completion of the fort, the settlers fired a few rounds of shot in order to announce the event in a military manner. When some Kentucky hunters heard the shots, they thought that the fort was being attacked by the Indians. Within 48 hours, the Kentuckians had organized a party and arrived at the fort. The settlement was surprised when 50 frontiersmen showed up. Among them was the famous Ohio scout, Simon Kenton, friend of Daniel Boone. The new settlers welcomed their friends, for they realized that if the need ever came, they could depend on the Kentucky frontiersmen.

The settlement around Fort Miami grew. It was known as Columbia, which is today part of the great city of Cincinnati. Four miles below Columbia on the Ohio River in December 1789 the town of Losantiville was founded. This settlement grew more rapidly than Columbia, and eventually the two settlements joined.

#### **Daniel Doty, Pioneer**

Men in the east were very excited about the new Miami country. They had read Christopher Gist's report. They had studied the alluring advertisements of John Cleves Symmes. One of these men was the twenty-five year old Daniel Doty. Young Daniel Doty was born to be a pioneer. He had dreamed of building a life in the western wilderness. One of his ancestors had braved the dangers of the rough Atlantic in the little



over and the other to fill in the space between the two islands.

The distance of the two islands is about 100 miles.

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Mayflower. He had listened to stories of how Edward Doty had overcome the hardships of early Plymouth.

Starting out from his New Jersey home, Daniel Doty went to Fort Pitt, and then by flatboat down the mighty Ohio to Columbia. He passed Marietta, the largest settlement in the Ohio country. He had seen the busy activity at Gallipolis where several hundred Frenchmen were building a new city in the wilderness. From there on the forests were unbroken. Trees and brush claimed everything to the water's edge. Once in a while, the forests were broken by a fur trader's cabin or lean-to. It was a beautiful trip in the autumn of the year. The trees were splashing yellows, reds, and browns across the blue sky.

As he approached the shore of the mouth of the Little Miami on October 23, 1790 Daniel Doty saw that the banks of the Ohio and Miami were lined with rows of cottonwood and maples. Rising to the first level there was a mixture of honey-locust, hackberry and box-elder set apart by huge sycamores. On a higher river terrace, Doty saw a large plain covered with a rich growth of trees of many kinds—the oak, the ash, walnut, hickory, beach and sugar maple. Then towering toward the skies was the buckeye.

Doty was impressed by a landmark of Fort Miami. It was the sycamore, king of the forest. It was about 1000 feet from the fort, and measured over 16 feet in diameter. On the north side of this straight, smooth giant of the forest was an opening so large that a man on horseback could ride through it.

While it appeared that this was a peaceful settlement, Daniel Doty knew that the Miami Indians were dangerous enemies. He enlisted as a member of the militia at Columbia, under the command of Captain John Gano. General Josiah Harmar at this time was out on the first major campaign against the Miami Indians, so the people at Columbia were dependent upon their own militia. It was not long until Daniel Doty was to see action. The news came of an Indian attack at Covalt's Station on the Little Miami. The militia rushed to the rescue of the small settlement. On this trip Doty saw what it meant to be killed and scalped. He wrote, "When a person is killed and scalped by the Indians, the eyebrows fall down over the eyeballs, and it gives them a fearful look."

No sooner had they returned from this mission, than another attack came. A messenger came with the news that Dunlap's Station at Colerain was under Indian arrows. The men at Dunlap's Station had fought bravely. The women visited the men at their posts of duty, giving them food and water. When the supply of bullets ran out, the women melted down their pewter spoons and plates. The brave women were never forgotten. When Doty and his militia arrived at the Station, the Indians were gone, but he saw first hand the results of an Indian raid.

Daniel Doty saw the need of church services in the new settlement. He volunteered to go to Kentucky to bring Reverend James Kemper and





his family back to the Miami settlements. In June 1791, accompanied by another man, the two pioneers started on their mission. They followed an old trail on which two men had been killed the week before. The trip was a success, and Reverend Kemper conducted the church services at Columbia. One of the early laws of the territory was that each man must carry a gun to protect himself and his family from attack on his way to and from church. So the men went to church at Columbia armed. Every Sunday morning the men would meet in parade, fully armed and equipped. Then they marched to church. During the worship services, the guns were stacked in a corner.

It was not the Indians that most impressed Daniel Doty. It was the rich, fertile soil of the Miami Valley. At Columbia he watched some farmers gather over 100 bushels of corn from each acre of land. This was the kind of country for which he was searching, and the place to build a home. He decided to see for himself if John Cleves Symmes' description of the Miami lands was correct. Symmes had written:

"The country is generally level, and free from stone on the surface of the earth. It is said to be well watered by springs and streams. The two Miamis which lie about 30 miles apart are supposed to be navigable higher up in the country than the northern extent of this purchase, so the interior farms will have navigation in the boating seasons."

Before getting settled at Columbia, Daniel Doty had decided to explore for himself. In the winter of 1791-92 he traveled up the Little Miami into the present-day Warren County. Then through the thick wilderness he found his way to the Great Miami River. There along the river he came to a great opening in the forest. Stretching north from the Dick's Creek Valley was a rich grassland.

Daniel Doty knelt on one knee and took out his hunting knife. He cleared off the grass, and dug into the earth. Down deeper and deeper he went with his knife. The soil was dark and rich. "This would make a good farm," he thought to himself. The land was cleared, and ready for the plow. Perhaps the ancient Mound Builders had cultivated this very soil. As he looked to the west he saw a large mound still standing. Then he saw the steep, rising hills. Thousands of years before on the crest of one of these hills near Jacksonburg, the Mound Builders sent smoke signals to their friends at Miamisburg.

The Red Man had cultivated this very spot along the Great Miami. Now all was deserted. The trees had not yet had time to reclaim the river bottom lands, frequently fertilized by the rich silt spread by spring floods. Hundreds of acres of fertile farm land were waiting for the white man's plow. Flatboats could get produce to market during the spring rains. Rich land and a river—what more could a man want? Daniel Doty called this spot the "Little Prairie." It was here that he decided to make his future home. On the east bank of the Miami, he built a crude log cabin, which was to be washed away by a flood in 1793.

Daniel Doty realized that it was too dangerous to bring a wife and



children into this Miami "slaughter house," as it was called. The Miami warriors were not yet ready to give up their claims to the land on which their fathers for many centuries had lived. This was the old Northwest; this was the Indian territory. Even the white man's Indian boundary line was less than 100 miles away. General Harmar, was at this time, on an expedition against the Miami warriors led by Little Turtle, their great chief.

### The Indian Wars

When Daniel Doty returned to Columbia he heard the bad news. General Harmar's army of 1400 men had been defeated by the Indians. They were finding their way back to Fort Washington, a few miles down the river. Many of them stopped at Columbia. Daniel heard many first-hand stories of their defeat at the hands of Little Turtle.

Congress on March 3, 1791 passed a measure to provide for the defense of the western frontier. Governor Arthur St. Clair, an old friend of President Washington of the Valley Forge Days, was put in charge. General St. Clair decided to build an advance fort. He went several miles up the Great Miami and at an important spot planned a new fort. During the summer of 1791 he directed the building of this new fort. which was 35 feet above the water of the Miami along the upper part of the plain. This fort was placed so as to command the passage of the river, and serve as an important link of communications in the Indian campaigns. Over 2000 pickets, 9 to 12 inches in diameter were used to enclose the fort. The trees were cut in 20 foot lengths, trimmed and carried along the ground by the men, as oxen could not get into the thick forests. A drainage ditch, 3 feet deep, was dug around the outside of the fort. Inside the fort, barracks were built to accommodate 100 men. In September, 1791 the fort was completed, two pieces of artillery placed on it, and a salute fired in honor of the new fort. The soldiers moved in. The fort was named in honor of the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton.

Going from Fort Washington to Fort Hamilton was a dangerous trip. Many a messenger was waylaid by the Indians, who hid behind the trees of the thick forest. Even the wagons, guarded by as many as 40 men were attacked by the redman with telling effect.

General St. Clair was now ready to move against the Miami tribemen. The Indians were well organized under Little Turtle and Blue Jacket. Their scouts watched and reported every move of the frontier army. By November 1791 the big battle was getting closer. The Americans were deep in Indian country. The attack came at the site of what later became Fort Recovery. The Indians had chosen the time and the site. From every direction they attacked in great numbers. The fresh, untrained frontier soldiers were scared. Never had they seen such an attack. Almost 1000 men were killed and many wounded on this one day. Only Braddock in the French and Indian War had suffered a worse defeat. General St. Clair retreated after having three horses shot while he was in the saddle.





When George Washington heard of the great defeat of St. Clair, he was very angry. However, it was found that St. Clair had done his best, but this wasn't enough. St. Clair was replaced as army leader, but remained as Governor of the Northwest Territory. Washington now knew that he must send his very best general to the frontier to deal with the Indians. He chose General Anthony Wayne.

With the defeat of Harmar and St. Clair, the Indians became more daring. Every settlement in Ohio was in great danger. When the people in the East heard the bad news, they stopped coming to the Miami country. Even those who were here, were wondering what to do. Some of them left for the Kentucky settlements, which were much safer. Daniel Doty knew that it would not be safe to make a settlement on the Little Prairie at this time. He had to return to his family in New Jersey to help make the living. So it was that in 1792 he left Columbia by flatboat, floated down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans, and returned to his home in Essex County by sea.

Daniel Doty had thus ended the first chapter in his life, as well as the first chapter in the history of a town. In that winter of 1791-1792 he had explored the middle Miami Valley. He had found the Little Prairie and the site of an unborn city. He had built a crude log cabin on the banks of the mighty Miami. This was the work of Daniel Doty—Explorer.





# Coming of the Pioneers



While Daniel Doty plowed the fields of his New Jersey farm, he dreamed of pioneering in the Miami country. He read every newspaper item on the Miami Valley. From these stories he followed the events in the west.

## General Wayne's Campaign

When General "Mad Anthony" Wayne arrived at Fort Washington, he changed an easy going military fort into a war machine. He brought in recruits. Soon he was drilling 4,000 men into soldiers. He did not rush to do battle with the seasoned Indian leaders, such as Little Turtle.

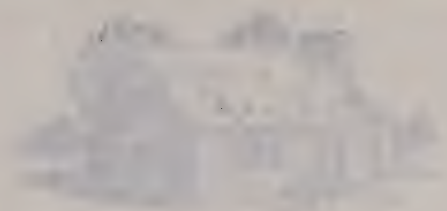
Wayne knew that Little Turtle with the help of the British had brought together the strongest Indian Confederacy in history. The Indians had fought St. Clair and won. St. Clair had been a great soldier of the Revolution. The Indians were driving the white man back to Kentucky.

"Mad Anthony" was determined to avoid the mistakes of the other two commanders. He planned that his men be well trained. He decided to move slowly and carefully. He was always on the alert. In fact, the Indians called him, "General Never Sleep." Cautiously he proceeded up the Miami Valley. October 1793 found him about 80 miles from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) at work on a strong fort, which he called Fort Greenville. In early 1794 Wayne had reached the site of St. Clair's defeat. Here he built Fort Recovery. The Indians tried again to wipe out the Americans at this spot, but were driven off. Within another six months Wayne had reached the place where the Auglaize River flows into the Maumee. Here he built another fort, and in face of the Indian danger called it Fort Defiance.

Little Turtle was beginning to worry. Never had he seen such an army or such a general. Little Turtle suffered another loss. William Wells, one of his close friends and scouts, deserted to join the white man. Wells had been taken prisoner by the Indians in a raid on a Kentucky settlement many years before. He was adopted by them, and later married Little Turtle's daughter, Sweet Breeze. Just why he joined the white man no one will ever know, and the unusual thing about the story is that Wells later returned to the Miamis to live the rest of his life.

Chief Little Turtle advised his warriors to make peace with the white man, but the Indians refused. So the day of battle grew near. Finally

# Contents of the Volume



The first part of the volume contains a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the Society since the last meeting of the Council, and a list of the names of the persons who have been expelled from the Society since the last meeting of the Council.

The second part of the volume contains a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the Society since the last meeting of the Council, and a list of the names of the persons who have been expelled from the Society since the last meeting of the Council.

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on August 21, 1794 the Indians chose the site. It was along the Maumee rapids, near the present site of Toledo, not far from the British fort. A tornado had blown through the area a few years before. Great trees had been uprooted, and there was a tangled mass of underbrush. The Indians called it the place of "Fallen Timbers." To the Indian way of fighting this was the perfect spot, for there were so many places to hide. Besides the great fallen trees would make it impossible for the cavalry to get through.

The Indians had misjudged. This time the Americans did not give way in fright. Their advance line was battered, but then came another second line to back them up. It seemed as if one solid line of steel were advancing on the red man. Wayne's men swept through the tangled forest, and the Indians had no time to even reload their guns. As they retreated to the British fort they found that their supposed friends were closing the great gates in their face. The battle for the Northwest was over. Wayne had made the Miami Valley safe for settlement.

There was a treaty to be made between the Indian and white man, so that legal title could be given for land. In July 1795 the defeated Indians, almost 1100 warriors of 12 tribes, met with General Wayne. The meeting was at Fort Greenville. Here the Treaty of Greenville was signed. This opened the whole Miami Valley as well as two-thirds of the state of Ohio for white settlement. In 1796 the British surrendered their claims to Ohio.

#### **Daniel Doty Returns to Ohio**

Daniel Doty read every word of the Treaty of Greenville. He knew it was now safe for his wife and children to return with him to the Little Prairie to begin life in the Ohio wilderness. Early spring of 1796 found Daniel Doty and his family on a flatboat floating down the broad Ohio for the Miami country. Going down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati was a long, hard trip. The flatboat was slow, and one could go from 20 to 30 miles without seeing a single house. But Doty noticed many more cabins in the wilderness than he had on his trip down the same river five years before. There were many other flatboats and keel boats on the river. Betsy Doty prepared the meals for the family from the supplies brought from Pittsburgh. Packed in big barrels and wooden crates were the prized possessions of the family.

Some Indians were seen along the shore, but they made no effort to harm the pioneers. They just wanted to look. However, they caused the children some worry, for many stories had been told about the Miami warriors.

At last the Doty family arrived at Cincinnati. The United States flag flew over Fort Washington. On the level floodplain of the Ohio stood a group of rough log cabins, with a cluster of two story homes in front of the fort. Only a few hundred people lived in the pioneer village. The flatboat was sold for its cut timbers at Cincinnati. Here supplies were purchased and arrangements made with a pack horse driver to help





take the Doty supplies and furnishings overland to Little Prairie.

Since there were no wagon roads in the Miami Valley, the pioneers had to depend upon the faithful pack horse, which could follow the old buffalo trails and the Indian routes. Each pack horse was equipped with a saddle on which the load was tied by means of a rope. Ten to fifteen horses were managed by two men, one man acting as the leader, while the other followed the pack train to keep watch over the loads to see that they were properly adjusted. Each horse could transport around 200 pounds of goods over the narrow, winding paths.

Slowly the Dotys made their way to Fort Hamilton. Two years before in 1794 the first lots had been platted, and the land was deeded to Israel Ludlow in 1795 by Jonathon Dayton. Dayton had received the land by purchase from Judge Symmés. Ludlow had chosen a good site on the Miami River. Since Fort Hamilton was no longer needed as a military post, the stores and property belonging to the garrison were sold in 1796, and the fort abandoned. Many of the officers and men of the fort stayed in the new town and built homes. Doty was pleased to see the pioneer settlement which would be a short trip by horse or by flatboat during the spring rains. Above Hamilton, Daniel Doty passed Gregory Station, a small military outpost he remembered from his trip in 1791 up the valley. Finally the Dotys arrived at the Little Prairie. Daniel was disappointed to see that his first cabin had been washed away, but he located his well. A new cabin had to be built. It would take at least two weeks to get up a roof for protection. In the meanwhile the family would have to camp out.

Since he had no close neighbors, Daniel Doty started to work cutting the big trees, and splitting them into puncheons and clapboards. His cabin of hewn logs was built under a young sycamore tree. The logs were carefully notched and put together so that each log touched the other in the wall. The cracks were filled with chinks of wood, which were plastered with soft Miami clay and mud. The plastering was done both inside and out. When the plaster was dry, the cabin had a neat appearance, and was warm inside.

The windows were made by cutting about three feet out of the logs in the wall, and taking two upright pieces and fastening them to the logs. Deerskin, or paper, which had been saturated with hog fat or bear grease, was pasted over the upright pieces as a substitute for glass.

The door was made from boards which had been split out of logs. It opened on wooden hinges, and was locked by means of a wooden bar, called a latch, which was raised by means of a latch string that was left hanging on the outside during the day and pulled in at night. The roof was made from boards split from logs and held in place by long poles fastened with wooden pins to the main structure. The "puncheon" floor was made by splitting logs into thick slabs, smoothing down the sides with an axe, and putting these split logs side by side.

The chimney was built with small twigs, plastered inside and out with





soft mud. In the fireplace logs were burned for both heat and light. Pine knots or grease-soaked rags furnished extra light when needed. Pots and kettles used in cooking hung from large hooks over the fire. Above the fireplace was a rifle, a powder horn, and a shot pouch. From the rafters were hung strings of dried corn, peppers and coon skins.

The furniture in the Doty cabin was homemade. A large slab, split from a tree, supported by four round legs made from hickory saplings, served as a table. Three-legged stools, made in the same way served as chairs. Three-legged stools were used because the floor of the cabins were so uneven that four legs would never touch at one time. Most of the benches, stools, tables and cupboards were made from buckeye and beechwood.

The beds were built into the log cabins. Doty once described how he built his first bed. He took a sapling with a fork at the proper height for a bed. The one end of the sapling was placed in a hole in the floor, and the other end fastened to a joist above. A round pole, with the bark still on it, was placed in the fork, and the other end went to a crack in the wall between two logs. A shorter pole went through a crack in the other wall. From the front pole were laid clapboards. The rough boards were laid on the poles supporting the bed. The head and back side of the bed were supported by the walls of the cabin. This bed of rough poles and boards was not too comfortable, but pioneers were very tired after a 12 hour day. Over the splinter-filled boards, were placed heavy bearskins.

Clapboards, supported by wooden pegs stuck into the logs of the cabin near the fireplace were used as shelves for the pewter dishes and spoons, the wooden bowls, trenchers and noggins. Noggins were small vessels shaped like a pail, made of wood, holding about a quart. When these were scarce, gourds and hard-shelled squashes were used. Many of the early spoons were made of horn. The pioneer men ate with their hunting knives.

Since the Dotys reared a family of 12 children, they found need for cradles. To make one of these, father merely cut down a large hollow sycamore tree, and fashioned the baby's bed.

During the first year at Little Prairie, Daniel did not get out a crop. That fall he had to go to Cincinnati for supplies, bringing them back on pack horses. He bought corn meal for \$1.00 a bushel. With this meal, Betsy made johnny cakes on a clapboard before the fire. Although this had to serve as their only bread the first year, the family had a variety of other foods on the frontier.

Doty's gun was most important in keeping the family in fresh meat. With it he provided bear, deer, turkey, goose, duck, quail, squirrel, rabbit and pheasant. Some of the meat was dried and salted for winter use. The deer and bear provided not only meat, but pelts. Deerskin was used in the making of clothing and moccasins, and the bearskin for rugs and covers. Winter caps were made from raccoon skins. The Miami River which went by Doty's door was filled with catfish, pickerel, pike,



bass and sunfish. Wild blackberries, grapes, plums and crab apples were made into preserves by good wife, Betsy. Maple sugar was used for sweetening. There was plenty of wild honey. Wild goose, duck and turkey eggs were eaten.

By 1797 Doty was able to put in a crop. The land on the Little Prairie was rich and easy to cultivate. The loose black soil produced a bumper crop. Pioneer Doty used oxen to cultivate the land, for they were much cheaper than horses. He could make the yoke for the oxen himself. An ox that was injured while working was not shot as was a horse, but fattened and killed for beef, with his hide tanned for leather. The first plows used were those with a wooden mold-board. From the forks of a tree, the harrows were made. At first corn was planted in hills made with a hoe, and the wheat grain was broadcast by hand. The wooden harrow scratched the wheat seed under the soil.

Although the Indians did not present a danger to Daniel Doty on the frontier, the wild animals did. In those early days he had many exciting encounters with wild cats and bears. On a Sunday morning in the autumn of 1796 Doty was out looking over a crop. He had not taken his gun with him. As he was walking along, he heard his dog barking across the cornfield. When he reached the other side of the field, he found his dog had cornered a big wild cat, which was perched on top a rail fence. Upon the sight of the pioneer, the wild cat ran into the cornfield. When Doty looked out into the dry cornstalks, he saw the cat running toward him, followed by the dog. Doty gave the cat a kick and grabbed his hind legs. He pressed his left foot on the cat's throat and held it there until the cat died. Although he had killed many wild cats before this, he reported that this was the biggest one he had ever seen.

The best friend of the pioneer was his dog. Daniel had several which he used in tracking down the wild animals. His favorite dog was one given him by an Indian friend. One day while out hunting, his Indian dog began barking. When he arrived at the spot, he found that his dogs had treed a big bear. The bear was on a limb near the ground, but as the dogs jumped at him, he snapped his teeth and climbed higher.

By moonlight, Doty took aim, and hit his mark. The bear fell to the ground, and the dogs leaped on him. Since the bear lay still as if he were dead, the pioneer took out his hunting knife, and began to stick it into the side of the bear. This revived the big bear, and in a second he threw off the dogs, and sprang for Doty. With his two heavy, sharp paws, he clutched the pioneer's shoulders with his mouth wide open. Seeing his sharp white teeth coming closer and closer, Doty had but an instant to act. He later said of this incident, "I thought that if I was a man, I could knock him down; I gave him a blow in the throat with all my strength, which prostrated him flat on his back. His claws tore my coat, and I knocked him over." (That shredded, blood-stained coat remained an historic relic of Middletown for over 100 years.)





When the dogs saw the bear attack their master, they sprang at the bear, which ran off. Seizing an ax, Doty followed and struck the bear several blows with the sharp tool. After he had cut the bear's hind legs off, he brought the ax down on his back and killed him. After the bear was dead, Doty later recalled, "I felt myself weak as a woman. I went and got my cart and oxen, and hauled the bear home. He was as good meat as I ever did eat. By this time (1797) I had raised a crop of corn, and had got a hand mill to grind it, and we fared sumptuously every day while the bear meat lasted."

The wolf and panther were also found in the forests in the Middletown area. In 1806 the officials of Butler County offered a bounty on every panther and wolf; fifty cents for the scalp of one under six months of age, and a dollar for one over that age.

But it was the little squirrel and the big bear which menaced the pioneer most. They were after the corn, the pioneer's main food and money crop. An old bear would sneak to a hill of corn, pull down the stalk, husk the ears of corn and have a feast. In one night a bear could do great damage to a small corn patch. But if the bear were seen by the farmer, it was the farmer who had the feast, not the bear! When the bear thought he was unobserved, the pioneer might be waiting in ambush—in that case it was almost certain death to the bear. The best part of the bear was used as meat by the pioneers; his skin, as money at the country store. The bear fat served for frying hominy, and what was left gave a feast for the dogs.

The "hominny block" was an important part of the pioneer home. A short log or tree trunk was hollowed out to resemble a bowl. Corn, which had been shelled, was thrown into it, and cracked into small bits by a wooden hammer. The meal thus made was used for Johnny cake, corn pone and mush. Daniel Doty was more fortunate than most pioneers. When he came down the Ohio on his flatboat he brought a hand mill. In 1797 he ground his corn in this mill, the first one in Butler County.

As other pioneers came to this region, he permitted them to use his hand mill to make corn meal. Corn was the crop of the early frontier. Land which had not been cleared fully could be used for growing this crop. Hills of corn were planted between the deadened trees; in Ohio crops of 60 bushels an acre were common. Corn was easily stored and handled. It took only one-tenth as much seed as wheat; one-fourth as long to ripen. The green corn furnished "roastin' ears". The cobs could be burned in place of wood.

While Daniel Doty built the first log cabin and made the first settlement in what is now Middletown, Ohio, it was not long until other settlers arrived. His original cabin stood on the east bank of the Miami, almost opposite the site of Barnitz field.

Daniel Doty, the explorer and pioneer, thus became the father of Middletown.





## The Pioneers Build A River Town



Stephen Vail had come to Middletown in 1800. Like Doty he was a native of New Jersey. Two of his sons and a daughter had settled the year before in Warren County. Vail was the father of ten children, many of whom stayed in Middletown.

Vail purchased a tract of land on both sides of the Miami River. After building a cabin near the river, he decided to build another on higher ground. This time he chose what is now the site of the Oglesby-Barnitz Bank.

On November 1, 1802, Vail, then 65 years old, made the long trip on horseback to the county seat. This area was then part of Hamilton County, with Cincinnati the center. By starting out at 4 o'clock in the morning, he was able to get to the Court House to carry out his plans. He had made a plat of a wilderness village, surveyed into 52 lots, leaving the remaining part of his 100 acres in farm land. This original plat is still on file at Cincinnati. After filing his plat and signing the legal papers, Vail went over to the newspaper office. He paid for running the following advertisement:

"Middle-Town. The subscriber has laid off a town on the eastern bank of the Great Miami River, about one mile above the prairie, where lots are now ready for sale.

"The town is beautifully situated, on ground high and dry, which has heretofore proved healthy. There is adjoining the town a grist mill, a saw mill, and fulling mill, all going. Water of good quality may be had by digging from 15 to 20 feet. From its central situation and many other advantages which it enjoys, expectations are entertained that it will become the seat of justice of a county as soon as division takes place; and for this it is calculated—ground for a court house, jail, grave yard, church, etc., having been laid off in good situations. The terms of sale may be known, and a plan of the town seen, by applying to the subscriber on the premises. Stephen Vail." Since the town was not near the center of the county when it was set off, Middletown was not considered for the county seat.



Middle-Town. It still remains a question as to why the town was given this name. It would appear from the important dash in the advertisement that the answer is obvious. However, one historian felt that the town received its name from Stephen Vail's hometown, Middletown, New Jersey. It appears that only Stephen Vail could have answered that question, and he never did.

Middletown, when laid out by Vail, represented another speculation in the Miami country, but it soon grew into one of the principal settlements of frontier Ohio. Stephen Vail had entered into a contract with John Cleves Symmes, who had sold land which he did not own. Vail died in 1808 without ever receiving a deed for his land in Middletown. Although he had laid out the town plat, and sold lots, he could not give the buyers a deed. The buyers had only Vail's word that they had purchased the lots. To settle this problem a case was brought before the Ohio Supreme Court, and the fact was established that some of the lots—at least 13 or 14—had been sold for \$20 each. The court was asked to give a deed to the owner.

At first Middletown was not a town or even a village. It was just a small cluster of houses along the Miami River. Law was provided by the Justices of the Peace of Lemon Township. These men were called squires, and had the respect of the community.

The early settlers of Middletown were fine men. The Dotys, Potters, Bonnells, Enochs, Vails, and Dickey's were from New Jersey; they were descendants of the Scotch-Irish. Descended from people from Holland were such men as Peter Van Derveer, and John Sutphin. Later others came from New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. Oglesby, Wampler, Barnitz, Mumma and Young were representative of this group. Many of the first settlers of the village were Revolutionary soldiers. As these soldiers were buried in a cemetery on a bluff above the Miami River, which caved in during a flood, it is impossible to know who was buried there. Others were placed in the Little Prairie churchyard, which has also disappeared. Some Revolutionary soldiers were laid to rest in a plot near Blue Ball. Many of these men had fought with Washington at Valley Forge. The first settlers who came to Middletown were a quiet orderly people. Some were Quakers, as the Vails, some were Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists.

At first the growth of the pioneer village was slow. It was a long and difficult trip from the East. Crossing the mountains was a real task, but some managed to drive cattle and horses over the Alleghanies. The emigrants traveled in groups. Pittsburgh was the staging area. Here the pioneers bought flatboats, equipped them, laid in supplies, and floated down the river to Cincinnati, where most of the boats were sold. Some of the pioneers, however, poled their boats up the Miami River. Those who sold their boats, followed the military road cut by St. Clair, which in the winter and spring was a sea of mud, and in the summer a cloud of dust.





Each year more and more pioneers came to the Middletown community. They fanned out in all directions. They laid claim to large areas of land, and each year cleared more and more land. Soon the pioneer found that he could produce more grain than he could use. He began to look for a market for his surplus so that he could procure the many necessities of life for his family. If the surplus could be sold profitably all well and good, but if not, the surplus would represent an economic loss for the farmer as well as the trading community.

The individual farmer was Middletown's first business man. With his savings he bought his land, and cleared it. How much he was able to make depended upon how hard he was willing to work. Not all farmers succeeded. Many lost their farms and had to find other ways of making a living. Some had to work for others in farming or leave the area and find another job. On the frontier they had a saying. It was "root hog, or die." The old hog on the frontier had to root for the acorns under the oak tree. No one fed him shelled corn. That hog had to get out and work for his food; so did every man in a pioneer community.

The farmer had to find a market for his goods. Every business man must have a product that someone else wants and can use. This is the basis on which our American free enterprise system works. People in the East and Europe needed the surplus farm grains raised in Middletown. If the farmer could sell his surplus, he could buy other goods in the stores of Middletown merchants.

The Middletown trading area faced two major problems as early as 1803. They were (1) how to provide adequate transportation facilities for getting the surplus corn, wheat and pork to market, and (2) how to develop an economic system for the community.

### Transportation

The problem of transportation was at first most pressing. Since sending the commodities over the Appalachian mountains to the East was too costly, the surplus had to be shipped down the Miami River to Cincinnati. From there it went down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, which was the key port for shipment to eastern and foreign markets. The Miami River furnished the earliest and best means of transportation for such heavy freight as flour, pork, corn and wheat.

It is small wonder that the people of Middletown rejoiced when Jefferson bought the Louisiana Territory, for it meant that there would be no more trouble with the Spanish over the port of New Orleans.

Daniel Doty watched the first flatboat go down the Miami River in 1799. This Dayton boat was loaded with grain, pelts, and 500 venison hams. From then on, until the coming of the canal, flatboats could be seen on the river during a large part of the year. Since the river was difficult to navigate, most of the boats were launched during the spring floods. Most frequently carried were shipments of flour, whiskey and pork to be sold at New Orleans. A flatboat could carry 300 to 400 barrels of produce. In one month, April of 1818, 1700 barrels of flour





were shipped from our neighboring city of Dayton to New Orleans.

Transportation costs were high. In 1799 Doty had to pay \$1.25 to get 100 pounds of produce from Middletown to Cincinnati. Many prosperous farmers and merchants later owned their own flatboats. Samuel Dickey, son of Adam Dickey, who was the owner of the Dickey Mills at Amanda, took a flatboat to New Orleans in 1818. He loaded the boat with flour and whiskey products from his father's mills, went down the Miami to Cincinnati, and then on to New Orleans. At this port he sold the flatboat and cargo, and returned home by horseback.

To the early Middletown merchant flatboating on the Miami was a necessity. The farmers traded produce for store articles, and the merchant had to sell that produce to realize a profit. Until the Canal came, the flatboat was in wide use on the Miami River.

Until 1820 flatboats were used on the Miami River during all seasons of the year, but after that time most of the flatboats started out during the spring freshet, for then it was easier to get down the broad river. Several kinds of flatboats were used in this trade. The "Kaintuck" boat was most common; being used for short trips. It was strong, oblong in shape and built with heavy timber. It was usually about 15 feet wide and 50 to 80 feet long. Its capacity varied from 100 to 200 barrels. The larger flatboat called the "Orleans" could carry from 200 to 400 barrels. Henry Howe, Ohio's pioneer historian, wrote: "Flatboats were made from green oak plank, fastened by wooden pins to a frame of timber, and caulked with tar or other soft substance that could be procured, and were enclosed and roofed with boards. They were used only in descending streams and floated with the current. Long, sweeping oars fastened at both ends of the boat, worked by men standing on deck, were employed to keep it in the channel, and in navigating difficult and dangerous places in the river."

A keel boat was lighter than a regular flatboat. It was more slender and more fitted to shallow water. It had the advantage of being able to ascend a stream. A keel boat which varied in length from 30 to 75 feet in length, had a capacity of 15 to 40 tons. If the wind were blowing sails were used, otherwise a crew of 6 to 18 men poled the boat upstream. As the boat went up the river the men often grabbed the overhanging branches and helped it along—this was called "bushwhacking." Mike Fink was king of the keelboatmen on the Ohio.

Flatboating on the Miami River was not easy. If the water was low, or if the boat met with obstructions, it sometimes took ten to twelve days to reach Cincinnati from Middletown. There were many obstructions in the Miami River, such as limbs and trunks of trees. Dams were built for the operation of mills along the river, and these often made the river more difficult to navigate.

When a fog settled over the river, and the banks or boats could not be seen, the boatmen blew his tin horn to indicate his position. Early Middletonians became accustomed to these strange sounds.



In 1817 one of Vail's sons built the Great Miami Barge, "Hornet." This was one of the largest boats on the river, and could carry 120 tons when fully loaded. On its first trip down the river it was greeted by the people of Hamilton, and Vail stopped to give his best wishes and thanks to all concerned with the commercial and agricultural prosperity of the county. The barge went all the way to New Orleans loaded with produce from the Middletown area.

The river traffic was increasing. It is recorded that in 1823 the spring shipments alone on the Miami River consisted of 6,495 barrels of flour, 1,424 barrels of pork, 945 barrels of whiskey, 50 barrels of cucumber and pickles, 600 barrels of corn meal, 28 barrels of beans, 15 barrels of kraut, 950 kegs of lard (60 pounds in a keg), 7,000 bushels of corn (in ears), 1,400 bushels of potatoes, 200 dozens of chickens, 30,000 feet of cherry lumber, 80 kegs of butter (50 pounds to a keg). From January to June 1823, 79 flatboats floated down the Miami River for the New Orleans port. Each carried an average of 300 barrels of produce. It was estimated that about one-half of the farm produce was transported to market by these boats, and the other half went by large wagons to the Cincinnati market for sale.

Transportation by land was expensive. It has been estimated that it cost \$10 per ton per hundred miles by land, and that at this rate flour could not be profitably shipped over 150 miles. Because of this high cost of getting farm produce to market, crops sold at very low prices. Corn and oats went for 10 to 12 cents a bushel; pork, \$1.00 to \$2.00 per hundredweight; and beef, \$1.50 per hundredweight. Many farmers decided not to raise grain crops for sale, but to raise cattle, hogs and horses. The hogs were sent to New Orleans by flatboat, or driven to market. Jeremiah Butterfield, a resident of Butler County, as late as 1819 drove his hogs through the forests to Detroit to sell.

Before 1809 there was a turnpike which ran from Cincinnati to Dayton. Since no turnpike ran through the town, Middletown was dependent upon river transportation. The Great Miami Turnpike, however, was only a few miles east of the village. Regular stagecoach and freight runs were made on this busy, dusty road. Monroe was an important station on this road, and her taverns provided food and rest for weary passengers. It was Abner Enoch, original settler of North Middletown, who wanted to find an outlet for the produce from his mills. With the help of some county funds, he cleared off a wagon road to the Great Miami Turnpike. This road still in use, is known as Manchester Road. Soon big freight wagons were bumping over the new road with Enoch's barrels of flour for the soldiers fighting in the War of 1812.

With the building of turnpikes came the Conestoga wagon. This wagon which received its name from Conestoga, Pennsylvania, where it was first built, was heavy and suited to the rough roads of the frontier. Later it was to carry America on West. Its broad wheels were covered by tires of iron, four to six inches in width. In order to keep the produce





carried in these giant wagons from spilling as the wagon went up or down hill, the wagon was built with a curved bottom, which made it higher at each end than it was in the middle. The top was covered with a dull white canvas cloth for protection against dust and rain. The wagons were often painted blue and red, the upper part being red. They were drawn by teams of four to eight horses. These wagons used on the Great Miami Turnpike took thousands of bushels of Middletown wheat and corn to the Cincinnati market.

As Abner Enoch was building his road to the turnpike, another event happened on the Ohio River. In 1811 the first steamboat, the "New Orleans" puffed past Cincinnati. Although a vessel of only 400 tons, it inaugurated a new era in river transportation. Before long local merchants and farmers floated their produce to market by flatboat and returned to Cincinnati by steamboat.

In 1824 a committee was formed in the Miami Valley to encourage the improvement of the Miami River for navigation. The committee, on which some Middletonians served, declared:

"We are confident that at moderate expense we can open and deepen the channel, so as to admit steamboats of reasonable draft and burden, to navigate the river for the greater part of the year, provided that some method is adopted by which they can pass the mill dams in safety. By this means the produce of the Miami country may be conveyed to any place on the Ohio River by steamboats in safety at a trifling expense."

In the 1820's Middletonians were trying to solve the transportation problem. Some wanted to do it by building better and more turnpikes. Others wanted to improve the river transportation. The heavy traffic on the river was seasonal, and the navigation difficult. The turnpike offered an expensive form of marketing goods. On the horizon was a compromise plan. It would bring cheap water transportation, open new markets all the way to Lake Erie as well as to the Ohio River, and still use the waters of the Miami. Middletonians were soon to enter Canal Days which will be described later.

### **The Town's Economy**

Since the pioneer merchant offered a market for the farmer's produce, he was the basis of the town's economic system. While it is true that the merchant took great risks, if everything came out as planned great profits were made. In 1806 one Middletonian complained that farmers found it hard to live on flour at \$3.50 a barrel and pork at \$2.50 a hundred. He charged that some of the merchants made too great a profit. He had seen some men who had come from Baltimore and Philadelphia with goods obtained on credit, who within four years had paid their debts and were living at ease.

While this was sometimes true, there are also many stories of merchants who lost everything they had. Sometimes their flatboats were wrecked on the river, and everything was lost. Sometimes their goods was lost on the way to Middletown. These merchants took a great risk.





The ones who lost moved away to another job. The ones who succeeded became wealthy. This again is part of our free enterprise system. Risk is a part of every economic undertaking. The frontiersman had to pay for someone's taking that risk. They sold their produce cheaper to the merchant because they did not wish to take the risk of flatboating it to market. They were always free to do so, and some of the farmers did.

The second major problem which the pioneer founders faced was how to develop an economic system for the young community. The high cost of transportation before Canal Days made it necessary to reduce the bulk of the produce which was to be sold. Corn fed to a pig made pork. Pork had higher value per pound than did corn, and the farmer or merchant could thus pay the transportation cost and still make a profit. Corn could also be made into whiskey and sent to the market in a barrel—a product worth much more. Wheat could be ground into flour. Logs could be sawed and finished into ready-to-use lumber. The pioneer, himself, wanted corn meal for his daily use. He needed sawed lumber. More than that, he needed money to buy the bare necessities of life. This could be had only by exchange. The exchange was based upon the value of his product. The Middletown pioneer had to get his produce to a market where it was in demand. This meant transportation.

The people of the area needed an economic system. The backbone of such a system is the development of an industry.

#### **First Mills in Middletown**

At first the only mill in Middletown was Daniel Doty's hand mill used for grinding corn. Even using it day and night, and Doty shared it with others, it could not grind all the meal needed in the area. From 1797 to 1800 this was all the pioneers had, and a water driven mill was badly needed. The first such mill, of which there is any record, was a gristmill built on Elk Creek. A colored man, Bambo Harris, in 1800 began to grind grain for the surrounding farmers. At that time the only other such mill in the territory was the Round Bottom Mill at Columbia.

What was probably the first mill in Middletown was also built in 1800, by Elijah Mills, a Revolutionary soldier. It was built on the Miami River near the Butler-Warren County line, which is the far northeast corner of Middletown today. So important was this mill considered to the community that Mills, who was a squatter, was given preemption rights to 1,100 acres of rich valley land for his effort. In January 1800 the Dick's Creek Valley farmers went so far as to petition Congress for a mill on Dick's Creek. This became known as the Freeman mill. In the Law of 1800, Congress, seeing the great need for these pioneer mills, granted the right of preemption of land to all who started such mills. Often the site was given free. When Butler County was broken off from Hamilton County in 1803, a mill tax was levied, so that assistance could be given those pioneer industrialists who wished to build mills.



Stephen Vail had come to Middletown in 1800. Even before he obtained a patent for his land, he began to lay the plans for the industrial development of the town which he fostered. In 1802 he erected a dam across the Miami River a mile north of the site of his town. This brush dam was well built; from it water was led by raceways down both the east and west sides of the Miami. On the east side the water ran to Stephen Vail's saw and flour mills, which were built at a cost of \$600. On the west side of the river, the water turned the wheels of Aaron Vail's grist mill, which in time was taken over by John Mumma. Stephen Vail knew that a flour and a saw mill were absolute necessities of that day. Before Vail built his saw mill, all the lumber had to be made by the tedious and laborious method of whipsawing. Every piece of timber had to be reduced to the required size by hand labor. Since much lumber was needed in a growing pioneer community, it can be seen that a saw mill was most important.

The grist mill was even more important, for it not only ground the grain into use for the pioneer's family, but it also made possible a more saleable product—flour and meal. The builder of such a mill was considered a public benefactor, for the mill not only increased the value of neighboring lands, but it also encouraged others to come to the region to settle. Many of the settlers gladly gave of their labor without thought of pay to help construct such a mill.

Industry has always been the very life-blood of a community. It makes possible a better way of life for everyone. In addition to doing a service to a community, it creates many jobs. These jobs provide a living for families. Soon Vail had to hire men to work in his mills. These men became good citizens of early Middletown. They built homes, and bought their daily needs from the early merchants.

The preparation of corn for the grist mill was a simple operation. After shelling, it was ready for processing into corn meal. Getting wheat ready for making into flour, however, was a long, hard task, with which the early Middletonians were well acquainted. Wheat was cut by the use of a scythe, tied in bundles and dried. It was then taken into a barn, which was usually about 18 feet square and twelve feet high, with large double doors at both ends furnishing plenty of ventilation. The threshing was done on the barn floor. The grain was either threshed by hand or by horses; the first settlers threshed with a flail. Flailers were paid a tenth of the grain. If a man earned a bushel a day, he was considered a good worker. Oats, rye and barley were easier to thresh than wheat, for one could knock out from 20 to 25 bushels a day.

The grain was hauled into the barn from the fields in sheaves. The threshing was done as the wheat was needed. The cold, dry days of winter were used for beating out the wheat and other grain. This was hard work, which kept everyone warm. After the wheat was beaten out of the sheaf, the grain had to be winnowed from the chaff; that is, the wheat had to be separated from the straw. Only the well-to-do farmer could





afford a fanning mill, which was run something like a grindstone by the power of one man. Ordinarily after the farmer had used the flail, he raked the straw from the wheat.

Again the Miami River came to the aid of the Middletown area farmers. It saved them much labor, for it furnished the power, which drove the water wheels to grind the grain. Less fortunate farmers, far from mills run by water power, had to depend upon horses to run small grist mills which were set up in barns. In these mills which consisted of a pair of millstones, the customer brought in the grain, paid a toll, hitched his horses, and ground out his own grain. The farmers here had access to the grist mills run by Miami waterpower. While mills on the smaller streams were closed most of the time because of low water or when the streams were frozen, power from the Miami River was always available.

Since lumber was needed to build houses and barns, the saw mill answered this need. The large trees were felled and ox teams, drawing wagons piled high with logs bound by heavy chains, pulled them to the village mill, where they were made into lumber.

Stephen Vail's mills were successful. The brush dam and the races were used for over 50 years. These mills formed the industrial nucleus of Middletown. The old race for Vail's mills cut straight across the big curve in the Miami on which Middletown was located.

About 1804, David Enoch, built a gristmill and a sawmill two miles north of the Vail mills along the east side of the river. These mills were valued at \$2,000. In a few years Enoch added a woolen mill and a distillery on the same race, which was almost two miles long. At this same time (1804) Stephen Vail's mills were valued at \$1200 and Shobal Vail's at \$500.

Another Enoch, Abner, arrived in Middletown in 1800. He settled on section 23 and 24 north of the village. In 1815 he obtained the title to these lands through a deed granted him by President James Monroe. He engaged in business, manufacturing and farming. His large landholdings on the east bank of the Miami River were almost three miles north of Vail's village, now the site of Avalon.

The Enoch mills consisted of a saw mill, a grist mill, a distillery, and a woolen factory. The distillery did a good business. The typical distillery of that time was located on a stream, and consisted of a 25 to 40 gallon still—six to eight tubs. Such a still could produce a barrel of liquor a day. It was sold as soon as it was made, and was drunk as soon as it was sold. A farmer could trade a bushel of corn or rye for a gallon of whiskey. When the farmer ran out, he sent his boy with a bushel of grain to the nearest still to get the whiskey jug refilled.

A picture of industrial Middletown begins to develop. By 1810 there were four well developed industrial areas in what is now Greater Middletown. Starting at the far Northeast corner of the city on the Miami River was the Elijah Mills' grist mill. Then farther south in what is now the Avalon area was found the large manufacturing area of the Enoch grist

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mills, sawmills, distilleries, and woolen and oil mills. At the big bend in the Miami were the Vail mills. Following the river south to what is now Amanda were the mills of Samuel Dickey. These were both grist mills and distilleries. Adam Dickey, Samuel's son, also operated a grist mill and distillery on Dick's Creek above Amanda. He ground the corn for meal and converted it into whiskey. Adam Dickey owned 400 acres of land. His "flouring mill" could produce 75 barrels a day. Farther up Dick's Creek were the Freeman mills, which dated back to 1800.

These mills usually were in groups to serve the farmers of a particular area. In those days transportation was very difficult, for roads were only dirt ruts. In early days, too, many farmers still depended on ox teams.

Industry now provided the people of the Middletown area with ground cornmeal and flour for food, and lumber for building. There remained the problem of providing clothing. At first the making of woolen cloth was carried on in the home with use of the old spinning wheel. This was a long and arduous task. Then Enoch built the first woolen mill on the Miami River. The farmer could bring in his wool, and have it made into rough cloth. The first sheep were brought to Middletown in 1800, one year after the first hog had arrived. The hog meant meat for Middletown, and the sheep meant clothing.

Flax, a plant, was also raised by the farmers of Middletown. It was made into cloth and household linen. Combined with wool, it became known as linsey-woolsey, and was used widely for pioneer clothing. A by-product of the flax industry was linseed oil, and this explains what is meant by an oil mill.

The pioneer woman did not have a large wardrobe, nor did she depend upon others to make her clothes. Spinning, knitting and sewing were done in the home. Wool and linen were the first materials of popular use in the West. Both of these fabrics could be home-produced. In March the flax was sown, and by June it was ready for harvest. In the same patch potatoes could then be planted. The women gathered the flax, dressed it, and spun it. The sheep were taken to a small stream, and the wool washed. After the sheep had dried they were sheared, after which the burrs and cockles were picked from the wool. One-fourth acre of flax and two or three sheep produced enough cloth for most pioneer families. The wolf often got into the sheep pen and the snake into the flax patch.

The daughters of the family were given the job of spinning flax and wool. From the best flax fine linens for Sunday shirts for men were made; pantaloons for the boys and sheeting were made from the coarser quality of linen.

Cloth and flannel were spun from wool. The cloth, linsey-woolsey was made by using a linen warp and a woolen woof. This cloth, which was worn largely by women and children, was lighter and cheaper than flannel. This could be woven in a plaid, and before the cloth had faded, it was considered pretty. A young lady with a new linsey-woolsey dress felt she was properly clothed for any occasion. The cloth was dyed; a



dull black was made from black walnut hulls, a yellow from white walnut hulls, and blue from indigo. In the early days this work was done in the home, but the local textile factories slowly took this hard work out of the Middletown home.

At first the Middletown women were happy to have their wool taken to the carding mill at Enoch's. At the carding mill the wool was made into rolls, which were about 36 inches long, and less than 1 inch thick. From these rolls it was an easy matter to spin thread on the spinning wheel or treadle wheel, which was in wide use, for it could spin both wool and flax. Soon, however, it was possible to have the wool and flax made into cloth at the mills. These small woolen mills sprang up all over Ohio. According to the Census of 1820, some 30 counties reported woolen mills. In the Middletown area there were several of them. Isaac Harrison operated such a mill, which was later taken over and enlarged by Peter Poynter. By 1839 Poynter's mill was carding 7,000 pounds of wool a year and dressing 2,500 yards of cloth. Pilling and Mitchell operated a woolen factory which carded 10,000 pounds of wool a year, and manufactured 4,000 pounds into cloth. Enoch's output is not known, and in 1819 he turned his woolen business over to Kellogg and Olds, who did fulling, dressing and dyeing of cloth.

On Brown's Run, a small tributary of the Miami River, a woolen mill was established by William Emelite, who did country carding, fulling, and manufacturing of cloth. The mill was located between Germantown and Middletown. William Thurston, who bought the mill, asked that wool be brought in good order, with one pound of lard to every eight pounds of wool. He held himself responsible for any wool damaged. James Boyd, who owned a woolen mill at Dickey's basin, below Middletown, was later to establish a new and expensive mill at the Canal Lock. He did carding, fulling and dyeing, for cash or on the shares. People who came from a distance to have their wool carded obtained their rolls the same day they brought in the wool. Boyd advertised that he wished to purchase 10,000 pounds of wool at the highest prices. He sold common dress goods dark colors, drabs, etc, for 25 cents a yard; goods with a superfine finish for 31 cents a yard, and light colors less in proportion. It cost 6 to 8 cents a pound to have the wool spun, so until the pioneer days passed, it was usually done in the home.

The woolen factories manufactured cotton yarn also. The raw pound cotton was shipped from Cincinnati and manufactured into yarn. In 1839 almost 26,000 pounds of cotton came to Middletown and by 1847 this amount had more than doubled.

Elk Creek, another tributary of the Miami, also furnished power for manufacturing. Harris's gristmill, already mentioned, was the first in this area and began operations in 1800. Daniel Morkhert erected a sawmill on the creek. This mill was kept in good repair and used widely by the neighborhood. John Kelley built another mill there.

The pioneer home was now supplied with corn meal, flour, lumber and





cloth. There were other necessities. Salt was needed for flavoring as well as for preservation. Since salt was plentiful in Ohio, it was purchased outright. It was easy to transport, for a small amount went a long way. Another preservative as well as seasoning element was vinegar. This was made from apples. The apples were taken to cider mills, which were usually on a large farm, one mill serving several farm homes. These could be run by water power, but often used horsepower. The cider mill was a simple machine by which the juice was pressed from the apples. By natural process the cider became vinegar.

### **Johnny Appleseed**

The Middletown area had never lacked apples. In early times, Daniel Doty had seen an odd-looking man coming down the Miami River. Coming downstream from Franklin were two birch bark canoes which had been securely tied together. In the canoes were brown leather bags packed full of apple seeds. Long black hair, which had never been cut, could easily be seen beneath the tin saucepan which served as a hat, cooking utensil and water dipper. The real name of this man was John Chapman, but no one ever called him that along the Miami. He was simply called Johnny Appleseed.

While he has become an American legend, he was more than that. He actually lived. His canoes went up and down the old Miami. Many a local pioneer knew this strange old man, who roamed the lands along the Miami and the Ohio with one mission in mind—planting apple trees. For many years Middletown pioneers could point to an old gnarled apple tree and say, "That tree was planted by Johnny Appleseed."

From these trees, and then the seed from these trees, the apple became the favorite fruit of the local pioneer. The Grimes Golden, one of the valley's favorite, was the gift of Johnny Appleseed. Johnny went up and down the valley looking for places to start orchards. When he saw a good location, he would pull to shore and begin to clear a site. He often used as much as 16 bushels an acre. After planting the seeds, he built a brush fence, for this was the land of the deer, the enemy of tender apple tree sprouts.

Thus from its earliest days, Middletown had apples, cider and vinegar. Apples could be dried to add to the winter diet.

### **Making Maple Sugar**

Sugar was another need of the pioneer Middletown home. Orleans sugar could be purchased in the stores, but it was expensive. While some of it was used, maple sugar was a staple in this area. In pioneer days the making of maple sugar was a leading industry in Ohio. All the sugar maples were saved as the land was cleared, for maple syrup was a product which could easily be shipped by flatboat, and one which always had a ready sale. One good maple tree could produce a gallon of syrup.

Near Middletown were several maple camps. Many of the farmers west of town had fine maple groves and the excellent syrup was eagerly purchased in Middletown. Sometime in February or March the sap would





begin to flow. The maples, after being tapped, had elder or buckeye spiles driven into auger holes to catch the sap and carry it to the wooden troughs, which were set at the bottom of the trees. The troughs were made of logs, which had been split and hollowed out, and were about 6 inches deep and 3 feet long.

A barrel was set on a sled to collect the sap and the horse was driven in and out among the trees. A rude shelter built of clapboards, was constructed over a stone furnace. The sap was boiled in large iron kettles. Wood was used for fuel. The neighbors would come in when the sugar was to be made. Gossip around the open fire, and eating a cold lunch, while watching the boiling sap become thick syrup, furnished many a pleasant evening.

When the rich yellow sap began to send up its golden bubbles, it was time for the candy pulling. When this came off, hearty expressions of pain from burnt fingers and scorched tongues brought laughter.

Another farm industry, which was also carried on in the town, was butchering. Hogs were killed, and processed. Hams were smoked in the smokehouse for later use. Sausage was cooked and covered with lard in big crocks. Neighbors butchered at different times and exchanged fresh meat.

Candles and soap could also be made at home. Meat tallow was saved for candles. Lye from wood ashes and grease produced a strong, yellow soap widely used on the farm.

Once a week, the farmer made a trip to Middletown. The store of the pioneer merchant was an important place of commerce, as well as an important meeting place. Many community problems were solved around the cracker barrel. Middletown's early economic system was built around this pioneer merchant. He, the first exporter of the valley, advertised for goods, and offered to exchange his staples for grain and other farm products, which he shipped to market.

The life of the early merchant was hard. It was one of risk. He had difficulties in obtaining supplies from the east and south. Many local merchants had to travel from Middletown to Philadelphia, a distance of 600 miles, to purchase merchandise. Many of the roads were almost impassable. After purchasing the needed supplies in Philadelphia, wagons had to be engaged to haul the goods to Pittsburgh, a distance of 300 miles. This trip required 20 to 25 days, and cost from \$6 to \$10 a hundred pounds. At Pittsburgh the merchandise was transferred to flatboats, and the goods floated to Cincinnati. From there the merchandise was hauled to Middletown, the entire trip taking about three months.

When the merchant laid in a supply of goods, he still had to take a great risk. He was forced to become the local produce merchant, as well as the retailer. He had to take farmer's produce in exchange for goods, and then sell the produce to realize a profit. The early merchant was obliged to pack pork, and have wheat ground into flour. Then he had to build a flatboat and take his goods to New Orleans for sale. Before the



era of the steamboat, the merchant had to travel 1100 miles homeward, and much of the land route was through Indian territory. Sometimes he took the water route, going to Philadelphia and returning home over the mountains with his new stock of merchandise.

In front of each country store in Middletown was the hitching post, and near this a feed box.

In the first stores, barter was an accepted form of exchange. Wheat, rye, corn, pork and all kinds of country produce were taken in exchange for goods which the farmer needed. Some country products had a fixed cash value; these included linen, cloth, beeswax, tallow, furs, and feathers. The merchant could easily trade these to wholesalers for his goods, and the transportation costs on these products were small. Some things the farmer bought had to be paid for in cash. Coffee, leather, tea, powder, iron and lead were among the items not included in barter trade. The local tradesmen, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and tin makers often took their pay in farm goods. The customer often furnished his own leather, iron and cloth.

The pioneers needed money for small change. In order to meet this need the Spanish coins were cut into quarters, and circulated even if they had been tampered with. The merchants charged in terms of British standards of money. In 1799 tea sold for 16 shillings a pound and a loaf of sugar for 4 shillings. Little money was, however, in circulation, and barter was the common way of carrying on business. Skins had a cash value and were used as money. A muskrat skin was worth 25 cents; a buckskin, \$1.00; a doeskin, \$1.50; and a bearskin from \$2 to \$5. Thus one could buy a pair of cotton stockings for a buckskin; a yard of calico for two muskrat skins; a set of knives and forks for a good bearskin; a pair of moccasins for a coonskin, which was worth 37½ cents. The merchant gladly accepted pelts, which could be transported to market cheaply.

### Early Merchants

Among the early settlers coming to Middletown was Jonathan Martin. He opened a blacksmith shop at the corner of Main and Central. He was successful in his trade, but he gave it up in 1819 to become a pioneer merchant. He opened a dry goods and grocery store. His day-book, a relic of early Middletown, contains an exact record of the names of the customers, items purchased and prices paid. This gives a clear picture of business in the early village.

When Jonathan Martin died, his stock was sold at public auction. In the "Hamilton Intelligencer" the following notice appeared, "The subscriber will offer at public auction . . . the remnant of Goods belonging to the estate of the late Jonathan Martin." His stock consisted of dry goods, queensware, books, bonnets, and medicines. Martin's store was taken over by the firm of Tytus and Wrenn.

Abner Enoch operated another store in Middletown. He married a Miss Piper whose father kept a tavern in the town. In this same building





with his father-in-law, Enoch started a store. This tavern, serving as the first hotel and store, became very popular. Mark Dixon operated another store. Another early store on Main Street was operated by Jacob Leibee.

John Dodd operated a mercantile business, but because of financial difficulties, he closed his doors in 1832, and begged those who owed him to pay up for "the state of my affairs now require a prompt settlement with all." The early merchant had to give credit to attract trade, a practice which often ruined him, just as it did John Dodd. In business one always takes a risk. More merchants failed in early Middletown than found success.

William Young was the pioneer druggist of Middletown. He carried an assortment of drugs, paints and medicines which were obtained in the East or in Cincinnati. He filled physicians' prescriptions. In 1831, he sold his store to J. R. Kingling.

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Main Street was the early center of the business district in Vail's village. Most of the business district was centered in the area from Central south to the Bull Run bridge. This brook began its meandering run in a ravine in the northeast section of Middletown. It cut its way west to the present Clark Street, then turned south to cross the present site of the library, thence along the east terrace of Vanderveer Street, and west to the river. Bull Run has almost disappeared into great sewers. Southwest of the intersection of Vanderveer and Broad Street, water collected after a heavy rain. Rich alluvial soil was deep at this pool, and giant trees grew here, including elms, oaks and honey locusts. It was a beautiful grove.

The road to Hamilton began where Bull Run crossed Main Street. A wooden bridge was built across the run, and south of the bridge many beautiful homes were built by the leading citizens of early Middletown. The northern end of Main Street connected with another road which led to Germantown. By 1832 sidewalks were in use along Main Street.

The first time that Middletown appeared in the Census records was in 1820. At that time the people of Middletown made their living in these ways: 11 were engaged in commerce; 66 were engaged in manufacturing; 11 were engaged in agriculture. The total population was listed at 314. Middletown was, from the beginning, a town of industry and manufacturing.

The early industry of Middletown, as well as the industrial establishments near the town, were made possible by the power supplied by the Great Miami River. Middletown was, indeed, a River Town.

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## Canal Days In Middletown



The location of Vail's Village on the Miami River had been the first factor in Middletown's industrial development. The next impetus to its development was to come as a result of the building of the Miami-Erie Canal, with its route through Middletown. The building of this canal was facilitated and made possible by the Miami River, which served as a feeder.

Governor De Witt Clinton had been the Canal Commissioner for the State of New York. He pointed out to the people of Ohio the great benefits they could derive from a canal system. He knew that his state would benefit from increased tolls on the Erie Canal. The sentiment became so strong for the building of canals in Ohio that in 1819 the governor asked that a canal commission be established to consider the construction of a canal to link Lake Erie with the Ohio River. In 1820 an act was passed authorizing this survey.

Among the earlier settlers of Middletown, Abner Enoch, Hugh Vail, John Sutphin, John Martin, and Peter Vanderveer worked to have the canal built through Middletown. Realizing that water transportation was cheaper than land transportation, they asked either for the canalization of the Miami River or the building of a canal. Dr. Daniel Drake of Cincinnati began campaigning for a canal through this area as early as 1815.

Governor Brown appointed the Canal Commission in 1819, and in 1822 the Ohio Legislature appropriated money for the survey of the possibilities of a canal through the Miami Valley. This survey led to the authorization of the building of the canal.

At first it was thought that the Miami Canal would go from Toledo to Dayton and there connect with the Miami River. The difficulty with this plan was that the river was only navigable downstream, and there was need for travel both ways. Since the river had a fall of seven feet a mile, the cost of enlarging the bed and making it navigable both upstream and downstream seemed prohibitive.

# Small Rays in the Sun



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In 1825 Samuel Forrer, an outstanding engineer of his time, came to this part of the valley to make a survey. He decided that using the river would be too costly. He made plans to extend the canal to Cincinnati stating that the water from the Miami River would be used to feed this portion of the canal, which was to be 60 miles long.

The Miami-Erie Canal, 301 miles long, was begun in 1825 and completed in 1845 at a total cost of \$8,062,680. Along with other canals, it was partially financed by the state and federal governments. The Federal government in 1828 was petitioned by the General Assembly of Ohio for land donations for its canals. In 1827 the government had made grants to Indiana for the building of the Wabash Canal, and since part of this canal was in Ohio, Congress made a grant to the state of Ohio of almost 300,000 acres of public land. Altogether the state finally received 1,230,512 acres, from which it realized \$2,257,487. Private contributions totaled \$500,000.

On July 21, 1825 several thousand people gathered on Daniel Doty's farm. Daniel Doty, pioneer and founder of Middletown, was still its first citizen. From a large, beautiful brick home on the terrace above the river plain, he looked down over the valley with an interested eye. That day, the old city father was again to see history made. Governors Clinton and Morrow had made a trip over the proposed route of the canal. They visited Dayton, Cincinnati and Hamilton. Now they were in Middletown. John P. Reynolds, gave a public dinner in their honor. After the dinner they went out to Doty's farm. Here at a spot now marked by an historic monument (corner Yankee Road and Verity Parkway), Governor Clinton lifted the first spadeful of dirt. With the two governors was General William Henry Harrison, who was to become a president of the United States. On a flag-decked stand this famous group along with local dignitaries stood to review the parade.

At the end of the parade were the men who would really dig the canal. The specifications called for the "big ditch" to be about five feet deep, 26 feet wide at the bottom, widening out to 40 feet at the top. This meant a lot of digging and moving of dirt when no mechanical earth moving giants were available. In all it took 1,000 men to dig the Miami-Erie. Some were local farm boys working with team and scraper. This labor supply was not enough so the colorful Irish wielded the pick and shovel. These Irishmen were paid 30 cents a day and whiskey. The whiskey was to prevent malaria, which was a real problem in digging the canal. It is reported that for every three miles of canal dug, one man died of malaria. Men with horse and scraper were paid 75 cents a day.

As soon as Governor Clinton lifted that piece of sod, the real work on the Miami-Erie began, and this event was to put Middletown in every Ohio history book. Middletown was thus the scene of the inauguration of a new system of transportation, and the people were as excited over it as they would be over the construction of a new airport today.

It was important to this town's growth that James Geddes, David





Bates, and Samuel Forrer decided to route the canal through Middletown. Little wonder that the people of Middletown joined so enthusiastically in the celebration at the beginning of its construction. A local paper gave this account of the ceremonies:

"On Thursday last the people of the Miami Valley were gratified with one of the most interesting spectacles that every was, or perhaps ever will be, witnessed by them. It was the ceremony of commencing that great work of internal navigation which is destined to raise their character as an enterprising people, promote their happiness, both from a political and moral point of view, and increase their wealth as individuals and as a community.

"They saw the first sod raised by the great father and patron of internal improvements . . . Thousands of freemen drawn by the interest and novelty of the scene, were on the ground . . .

"The ceremony was commenced by appropriate and impressive prayer to the Throne of Grace by Rev. Vickers, after which Judge Crane of Dayton rose and delivered an address. Governors Clinton and Morrow then descended from the rostrum, which had been prepared for the occasion . . ."

After lifting the sod, muskets were shot off, and the local band played. At a dinner Governor Clinton made this toast: "The Miami Canal, like the Nile, will enrich and aggrandize the region of its transit—not by fertilizing a soil exuberantly rich but of opening lucrative markets for its products."

Before the canal came, Middletown was only a small, struggling frontier village, surrounded by swamps, dense forest and underbrush. The undrained land on the flood plain of the Miami was a breeding place for fever-carrying mosquitoes. The roads were poor and most of the year impassable. Every few miles there was a clearing and farm to be seen. Farmers were not encouraged to raise too large a surplus, because poor transportation facilities made transportation to market exceedingly difficult.

The canal meant that Middletown would become the trading center of this section of the Miami Valley. The fertile land could now be made to produce to the limit of its capacity, for a market awaited the surplus. Before the canal had been built, Jacksonburg, located north and west of Middletown was the trading center of this region, with a population larger than Middletown. The farmers for miles around went to Jacksonburg to buy the staples and clothing they needed. The canal changed all of this and the village of Middletown began to grow.

On July 1, 1827, less than two years after the work had begun at Doty's farm, the first water was let into the Miami-Erie Canal. It was Abner Enoch's millrace that served as the canal feeder. The first boat to leave Middletown was the Samuel Forrer, named in honor of the engineer of the canal, owned by Robert E. Campbell of Middletown. By the 4th of July enough water was in the canal so that this boat could be towed on

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trips between Middletown and Enoch's millrace. By August the canal was filled with water to Hamilton, and the trip was made to our county's sister city.

Early in January, 1829, Samuel Forrer stated that the water from the Mad River at Dayton was to reach the Middletown Canal, and that it would be only a matter of days until it would be filled, admitting the passage of boats between Cincinnati and Dayton. The extension was completed January 22, 1829. "Governor Brown" was the first canal boat to make the through trip; later that day the "Forrer," the "General Martin," and the "General Pike" also made the trip.

By 1852 it is estimated that 1,000 people a week went through Middletown on the canal. Packet boats were used for passengers. One could leave Middletown in the evening, sleep on the boat, and arrive in Cincinnati in the morning. The freight boats were large and strong, carrying great quantities of pork and grain to Cincinnati. The canal became the center of commerce in Middletown.

Since so many passengers traveled by canal, the packet lines prospered. Daily these lines made the trip from Dayton to Cincinnati, leaving there at 6 a.m., passing through Miamisburg at 8:30, Franklin at 10:00, Middletown at 11:00, Hamilton at 2:00 p.m., and arriving in Cincinnati at 9:00 p.m. under a typical schedule. Passengers were furnished with meals on board. Another packet ran between Hamilton and Cincinnati, leaving Hamilton at 5 a.m. and arriving in Cincinnati at 12:00. This packet left Cincinnati at 2:00 p.m. and arrived back in Hamilton at 10:00 p.m. Douglas, Buchanan and Company owned a canal line of daily packets.

Dr. Ralph W. Reed, in an original manuscript owned by Mary Doty Dell, a descendant of Daniel Doty, described Canal Days in Middletown. He wrote:

"The Miami-Erie Canal pursued its leisurely course past our lawn and several times a day, slowly up or down, the boats would pass. In the silent night one would sometimes hear the shouts of the drivers as they urged the plodding mules along the narrow tow path. The crew of the canal boat consisted of a captain, two drivers, and four mules. The captain did the steering by means of a long tiller connected to a vertical shaft attached to the rudder. This tiller was perhaps half leaned against and half sat upon. Projecting somewhat above the after-deck was the captain's cabin with a row of little windows. Here lived the captain and his wife and often small children. A small smoke stack projected above the roof of the cabin, while from the open door came the odors of cooking. Along the center, or what might be called the waist, was the cargo space, and in the decked overbow, or what in a real ship would have corresponded to the forecastle, were bunks for the drivers and a space to stable the mules. Two mules did the towing while the alternate pair were resting in their stalls on the boat. The tow-line was from two to three hundred feet long and the drivers walked beside the mules

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or sometimes rode one of them. As a means of transportation, a canal boat was a simple mechanism indeed."

Many of the canal boat captains were tough men to handle. They had an independence which they prized. Some of them were the scrappy, little Irishmen who had helped dig the canal. Many amusing stories are told of these captains: here is one told by Raymond Standafer, local historian of the canal.

Of all the captains of the canal boats, Bill Rogers was the toughest, roughest little Irishman who ever hit Middletown or the Miami-Erie. Bill fought them all—on board or on land. He gained a reputation for his fighting—he was never defeated. As his name spread up and down the Miami-Erie he finally found himself without a crew, for no one would work for him, although most of the boatsmen and canal drivers were Irishmen. The other canal captains never questioned Bill's rights at a bridge or lock. They would slow down rather than incur his wrath. So it was that Bill Rogers of the "Black Dragon" was without a crew, and what's worse for a hungry Irishman, without a cook.

But it doesn't seem to matter how bad a man is there is always a woman willing to take a chance on reforming him. There lived along the canal a pretty little Irish colleen by the name of Mary Connors. She thought she saw some good in Bill and she made her plans to domesticate him. Mary was well liked, and her friends were surprised at her interest in Bill. They warned her about him. Then Middletonians were further surprised to hear that Bill had proposed and that Mary had accepted. Mary had accepted with one reservation. She made Bill promise not to beat her if she married him. The marriage took place before a Justice of the Peace and the happy newly-weds returned to the "Black Dragon."

Bill brought up his mules and hitched them to the boat, while Mary went into the kitchen to fix some grub. They ate supper and then Bill returned to character, and asked, "Ain't we partners, Mary?" Mary answered they were. Then Bill ordered, "Then, by golly, get off this boat, and get on them blamed mules and start drivin'." So with a driver for the mules on the tow path, Bill was back in business. He had his skeleton crew for the "Black Dragon."

One of the unusual events during canal days, was the laying out of a new community to the northeast of Middletown. Abner Enoch had obtained permission from the state to use all the surplus water from the State Dam. He led this by a race to his already established mills. Realizing that the water power he obtained was of immense value, Enoch proceeded to lay out a town for manufacturing. He thought this town would compete with Middletown and perhaps eventually absorb the village.

In honor of the English city, he called the town Manchester. The plat of this town, recorded April 10, 1827 is found among the deed records of Butler County. Ninety lots, which were to front a street 50 feet wide were surveyed. The alleys, which were to be 16 feet wide, were to be used as mill races that would lead from the main race to the river. Bridges



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were to be erected at street crossings. The appearance of this unusual town would be like that of Venice.

Then Enoch proceeded to erect some houses for his employees. With his houses, mills and shops a little village developed. In his own home he had a grocery store and sold goods to his employees and neighbors. He did well and in 1839 advertised:

"The subscriber having erected a new distillery, and consuming a large quantity of grain, will at all times purchase corn, rye, and barley, for which he will pay the highest market prices in cash. Manchester, near Middletown. Abner Enoch." It is estimated that in 1835 there were about 25 houses in Manchester. Later a fire destroyed much of the village and the mills. All that is left of that venture is the name Manchester written in big, bold letters on a street, hotel, road and an industry.

Canal freighting became the occupation of many. A man would buy a canal boat and advertise that he was ready to do some freighting. John James, who owned the boat, "Maryland," advertised these rates for carrying goods from Cincinnati to Middletown: pork, 26c a barrel; flour, 18c a barrel; bulk pork, 18c a barrel; merchandise 19c a 100 pounds; iron 15c per 100 pounds; coal, 5c a bushel, and lumber \$1.88 per 1000 feet. The canal cut transportation costs more than half. Many of the owners of the canal boats were obliging to their customers. William McAdams, who owned the "Black Hawk," purchased goods in Cincinnati for his Middletown patrons. Canal boats were bought and sold frequently. The newspapers contain many such notices.

The canal established a new trade route for the Miami Valley. Merchandise was sent from New York City, rather than Philadelphia, up the Hudson River and across New York state by the Erie Canal. Thence to the Miami-Erie Canal by way of Lake Erie. Goods from the Ohio River now could be routed up the canal at a savings in transportation costs. Merchandise could reach Middletown in 18 to 20 days at a cost of about \$20 a ton.

The Miami-Erie canal was a profitable operation. The total collections for the whole year of 1835 at the four stations—Dayton, Middletown, Hamilton and Cincinnati—were almost \$20,000, and the following year it reached the \$30,000 mark. Middletown was ahead of Hamilton in tolls collected.

These accurate canal records give a rather complete picture of the economic life of Middletown for a period of several years. They reveal how much property of different kinds was received and cleared at the canal collector's office here. During the year of 1837 the following amount of property was cleared at the Middletown office: merchandise, 234,382 pounds; lumber, 24,022 board feet; sundries, 760,264 pounds; pork and beef barrels, 12,699; butter, 47,746 pounds; apples and seeds, 19,124 bushels; beans and bran, 4,209 bushels; salt, 141,124 bushels; hams 445 hhds; stone, 150 perch; brooms and handles, 26,424 pounds; hoop poles, 9,495; wood, 78 cords; lard, 30,454 kegs, bulk pork, 2,531,346 pounds;

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whiskey, 17,887 barrels; corn, 53,255 bushels; iron nails, 52,343 pounds; stone coal, 500 bushels.

These statistics show that by this time Middletown was an important producer of pork and pork products. The hog was king. Lard, bulk pork, and hams were leading exports to Cincinnati, which became known as "Porkopolis." Flour and whiskey were being exported by the mills of Middletown along the Miami River. The farmers brought in their apples, butter, beans, lumber and wood to export to other communities. Mr. Simpson had an iron works in Middletown, where he did the iron work required on the canal and manufactured nails. Brooms were manufactured here for many decades from broom corn grown in this vicinity. Apples were grown on the hills along the Miami River.

During the cold, freezing winter months, the canal was closed. During the time it was closed, ice was cut from the canal and stored in great ice houses for summer use. Water was diverted from the canal into shallow ponds where ice was also cut. In early spring the canal was open for navigation. The locks often had to be repaired, and when a lock broke, the canal at that point was closed. The repairing of locks and the stone masonry on the canal employed a large number of skilled workmen. Darius Lapham, as resident engineer, received \$1500 a year; and a superintendent was paid \$1,440. The Census of 1840 showed six Middletown men made their living through the "navigation of canals, lakes, rivers" and that ten were employed in the learned professions and engineering.

The locks of the Miami-Erie Canal were used to furnish water power for the early mills. The lock at Amanda furnished power for the running of a grist mill and a distillery. Before the coming of the canal, Dickey had used the waters of Dick's Creek for power, but the water power of the lock at Amanda was more dependable. Around the lock and the mills which it fostered grew up a little hamlet, which Dickey named in honor of his wife, Amanda. The owners of the mills paid the canal offices an annual rent for the use of the water. Races were constructed and many a pioneer mill was begun. Around the Doty lock in Middletown, a paper mill began.

As the citizens of Warren County saw the advantage of being on a canal route, they decided in 1830 to build a canal leading from Lebanon to the Miami-Erie Canal at Middletown. The state legislature passed on February 22, 1830, a special act, granting a charter to the Warren County Canal Company. This private company began the canal, which was to feed the Miami with the products of the rich Warren County farms, but when it failed, the General Assembly purchased the canal, and decided to make it part of the Miami-Erie system. It was completed in 1836. Many of the contractors refused to do the work, and the contracts had to be relet at higher prices. The canal ran down the valley of Turtle Creek, and over the level country from Lebanon to Middletown. It was 18 miles long, and had six complete locks built of Dayton stone.

It is not to be feared that by this time the people of the country will have forgotten the lessons of the past.

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It furnished valuable water power at Middletown and Lebanon. At Middletown the Iglehart brothers leased for 99 years all the surplus water of the canal for the annual rent of \$100. They built a flour and saw mill and did a large volume of business. By 1841 the Warren County canal was doing little business. Because of the competition of the new turnpike roads running from Dayton, Hamilton, and other towns to Cincinnati, this canal was built too late to be of much value. Since full boat loads could not be gathered at one place, often the produce was taken to market more cheaply by wagons, which brought back a return load from the city. Low rates of tolls were charged on the turnpikes and people took advantage of them.

In 1855, J. D. Ward of Lebanon, introduced a bill into the legislature to abandon the Warren County Canal, which had resulted in a great loss to the state. Everyone agreed that the "Lebanon Ditch" should be abolished, and in that year it was sold to L. D. Campbell. This canal had brought some farm produce into Middletown for marketing, but the water power which it furnished was its most significant contribution to industrial Middletown.

The 1820's had been the day of the canals. In the 1830's Ohioans turned this interest to building turnpikes, and in the 1840's the railroad began its journey into Ohio. It was the shrill whistle heard one morning in 1851 that really heralded the end of the canal. Somehow the canal lingered on way up into the next century, even though its commercial usefulness was ended.



It is a fact of history that the power of the government is not absolute. It is limited by the law, and the law is made by the people. The people have the right to elect their representatives, and these representatives have the duty to represent the people. The government is not a separate entity, but it is a part of the people. The people are the source of all power, and the government is their servant.

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# The Growth of Local Institutions



When Middletown was first laid out, it was a village in Lemon Township. The Constables of the township preserved law and order, and the Justices of the Peace handled all court cases. The men who held these positions were highly respected in the small community; such men as David Heaton and Ezekial Ball were long remembered. The most important cases, of course, were taken to the Hamilton courts for settlement.

## Village Incorporated

With the growth of the village, the citizens saw the need for a local town government. In the fall of 1832 many of the important citizens met at John Reynolds' "Black Horse Tavern," the community center of early Middletown. The men decided that the village should be incorporated as a town under the laws of the State of Ohio. Here many problems came up for discussion: (1) how should the town be governed; (2) how should the enabling act be drawn up for the legislature; (3) what kind of taxes should be proposed; (4) should stores be licensed; (5) what officers would be needed and how should the election machinery work.

After many discussions in regular meetings at the Black Horse as well as many informal discussions around the "Cracker Barrel" it was decided to incorporate the village. Finally the group came to an agreement on the basic act, as individuals made compromises for the good of the community, and agreed on the draft to be presented to the General Assembly of Ohio. In January 1833 it was presented at Columbus, and on February 11, 1833 the state legislature passed a law which permitted Middletown to incorporate. The first section read:

"So much of the Township Lemon, in the County of Butler, as is comprehended in the recorded plat of the Town of Middletown, together with such plats as have been or may hereafter be recorded as additions hereto, and any and all tracts lying between such plat and any additional plat, be erected into and constitute a town corporate, by the name of the Town of Middletown."

There were twenty sections in all in this act. The second section provided for the holding of elections. Only white male inhabitants who





had resided here six months were to be permitted to vote. Elections were to be held once a year, on the first Saturday in April, for a mayor, recorder and five trustees. Two judges and a clerk were to preside over the election, which was to be held "between the hours of one and four." As long as a law or ordinance did not violate the Constitutions of the United States, or the State of Ohio, it could be enacted by the town. At that time a town had "home rule" and could do almost as it pleased.

The town had to have money on which to operate. In section 7, the right was given to the town council to levy a tax on both personal property and real estate. These taxes were to be collected by the town marshall and were not to exceed during any year "one-half of one percent." Another means by which the town could obtain money was through issuing licenses to taverns and houses of entertainment; this tax varied from \$12 to \$50 a year.

Section 18 was unusual, for it stated that if no election were held the following April, at any time ten householders could call a meeting of the electors giving 12 days notice of the meeting and its purpose. After posting the notice in three public places, the voters could proceed with the election. Now what happened no one knows—in fact that's the odd thing about it all—nothing happened! Perhaps the citizens of the village thought that living in Lemon Township with no taxes, except very low county taxes was better than living in a town and paying taxes. Perhaps the people just lost interest. It was not until four years later, on March 14, 1837, that a notice appeared in the three public places. This signed notice stated that an election for the purpose of electing officers for the town would be held from 1 to 4 o'clock at the home of Christian Forrer. It was signed by ten leading citizens. On the first of April the two judges and the clerk were elected and they certified that 106 legal voters lived in Middletown. So it was that on the first Saturday in April, 1837, the electors selected the towns first officers: Mayor, I. T. Gibson; Recorder, F. J. Tytus; Trustees: Daniel Leibee, Hugh Vail, John Russell, Stephen Vail, and George Wrenn.

When the council first met on April 18, 1837 the first ordinance provided for the raising of money. The granting of licenses took up much of the time of these early sessions. A fee of \$20 was the usual charge. With this money, \$100 was appropriated to be used to make sidewalk improvements that first summer. At the close of the first year, it was announced by council that \$474.47 had been received, and that \$234.25 had been spent for street and sidewalk improvement, \$76.48 for fire ladders, with the remainder going for salaries. A marshall was hired for \$5 a month. In the early years, the town government was supported by fees and fines rather than by a tax levy.

Since the town had a problem with people who drank too much liquor, the council decided to build a temporary jail. This building was to cost \$10, and Tytus was put in charge of its erection. This was the first building owned by the town.



Being a farmer's town, it might be expected that the first important public building would be a Farmer's Market. The trustees felt this was most needed, but first they took a poll of the citizens. After asking 114 people, they found that 88 wanted the building, while 22 opposed it, and 4 expressed no opinion. F. J. Tytus, George Wrenn, and Daniel Leibee were appointed a committee to see that the market house was constructed. It was erected at what is now the intersection of Vanderveer and Broad Streets. The building was 50 feet long and 22 feet wide. Since the town did not have the money to pay for its construction all in one year, the contractor agreed to take his money whenever the town could afford to make a payment. In 1839 \$219.55 was paid on the market house.

The cost of running the small town was small. Salaries listed for 1839 included: mayor, \$13.30; treasurer, \$10; recorder, \$3.37; attorney, \$5. The officers remained the same for several years. F. J. Tytus handed over his job as recorder to young George C. Barnitz in 1844.

Many interesting ordinances were passed in those early days. One was to "regulate the measurement of wood and appoint a wood measurer." The ordinance stated: "Be it ordained by the council of the Incorporated Village of Middletown That the Cord of Wood shall contain 128 feet of solid measure . . ." It was provided that the town council appoint a wood measurer whose duty it was to measure any wood presented to him for measurement. He was to get 5 cents a load for his services, which the purchaser was to pay. Any vendor giving short measure was to be fined from \$1 to \$5. The mayor's office was the town hall of that time.

### Fire Protection

The early city government had solved some pressing problems during the 1840's. The streets and sidewalks were put in better shape. There was a jail for those who disturbed the peace and a marshal to keep order. The farmers had a fine market house to retail their products. There remained the problem of fire protection. Since the buildings of wood construction were so close together there was grave danger of a fire spreading from one place to another and destroying the whole town. Middletonians realizing this danger, took measures to prevent such a calamity. At first a bucket brigade had been used. The town trustees appropriated \$72 for ladders, and this was the beginning of a fire department. The ladders and the ladder wagon were kept in a storeroom owned by F. J. Tytus, and the wagon was horsedrawn. A volunteer force operated the ladder wagon.

This fire protection was not adequate for the growing community, and in 1848 the city trustees held a meeting in which they discussed the purchase of a fire engine, which was advertised for sale at Cincinnati. Our officials went to Cincinnati, bought the engine, called the "Pat Lyon" for \$500, and brought it home on a canal boat. They gave a note for it. When they got the engine back to Middletown, it was discovered that it was without a hose. More notes were drawn for the purchase of 1,000 feet of hose. David Wolverton bought a hose carriage which was





to be paid for after the debt for the engine and hose had been liquidated.

In 1849 the Middletown Fire Department, a voluntary organization, came into being. Both active and honorary members, who paid dues of \$1 a year, approved the Constitution and By-Laws. The president of the company was the fire chief who had direction of the entire apparatus except the hook and ladder division. During the time of a fire, he could change the position of any or all members of the company at his discretion, but his orders were in all cases to go through the commanding officers of the division. In case of a disagreement, at the time of the fire, parties concerned were to submit the argument to the directors for a decision. Among the signers of the Constitution were George Barnitz, William Oglesby, David Heaton, Jacob and David Leibee.

Another competing company was organized. It was the Columbia Fire Department. The two departments staged races to see which could reach the fire first. The winner was presented a silver-plated trumpet.

Notices appeared in the local paper, then the "Middletown Emblem," reminding the firemen of their meetings and duties. Those not attending the monthly meeting were fined. Meetings were held at the Post Office.

Fire insurance was in force in the 1850's. When a fire caused damage to a building, David Heaton, insurance adjustor made an examination of damages and had the building repaired.

#### Postal Service

Communication is an important function of government. People like letters to keep them in contact with relatives and friends. Much business is transacted through written communication. Pioneer Daniel Doty had to get his mail from Hamilton, and so did the early settler of Vail's Village. It was not until April 1807 that the post office was established at Middletown. Alexander Lanier became the first postmaster, setting up his office in a front room in the log cabin of Ezekiel Ball, Justice of the Peace.

The first mail received here came down the Ohio River to Cincinnati and to Middletown by mounted carrier. There was one mail a week. The route went up from Cincinnati through Lebanon, Xenia and Springfield to Urbana, thence to Piqua; and from there down the Miami trail to Dayton, Franklin, Middletown, Hamilton and back to Cincinnati. A letter picked up anywhere along the route had to be sent to Cincinnati and then back again around the mail circuit.

When one examines early letters, he finds that there were no postage stamps on them. The amount of postage due was written on the outside of the letter. There were no envelopes, the letter being folded so as to form its own cover. At first the paper used was a buff color and later blue became common. Since the rates of postage were based on the number of pages, most pioneers held their writing to one page. Every inch was covered, except the outside fold where the address was written. Writing was kept small, and paragraphing forgotten to save space. Sometimes the paper was turned sideways and writing was done across the first layer. The letter was sealed with wax.





Postage rates were high. To carry a one-sheet letter for 30 miles cost 6 cents; 80 miles, 10 cents; over 150 miles, 18 cents; over 400 miles, 25 cents. Newspapers were delivered anywhere within the state for 1 cent, and outside the state within 200 miles, 1½ cents. Magazines were mailed at the rate of one cent a sheet for 50 miles, and 2 cents a sheet over that distance. When the mail was heavy, the newspapers and magazines had to wait.

Thomas Jefferson appointed John Reily the first postmaster in Butler County in 1804 to serve Hamilton.

The early postoffices of Middletown were later run in connection with one of the local stores, where boxes were put up for the citizens of the town.

In the winter the snow on the Appalachians was deep, and the eastern papers were received here 8 to 10 days late. These were eagerly awaited by the editor of the *Middletown Mail*, who reprinted his news from these papers. Leased telegraph wires were still several years away.

In 1850, while David Heaton was the local postmaster, the first daily mail was established between Cincinnati and Middletown via Princeton. In July 1851 a new post office law went into effect. The rates of postage were reduced, and a cash system inaugurated. People could now prepay their postage and newspapers had to pay in advance by the quarter. Postmasters could no longer give credit for postage due. David Heaton posted this notice above the door: "Anyone coming to the office and finding a letter for himself, and not having the money, must get the money before he can have the letter."

In 1851 Middletown had two daily mails, one from the north and one from the south. The southern carrier arrived "precisely at some period between 10 o'clock a.m. and 3 o'clock p.m. and the northern mail reaches us somewhere between the hours of 12 o'clock noon and night. They are very regular in their arrivals." Small wonder that local citizens used to ask on the streets, "Is the mail in?"

When the mail did arrive it took the postmaster about 2 hours to sort and put it up in the boxes. Postmaster Heaton explained that it took so long because "there being so many different apartments in the saddlebags, a pair of long nippers are used to bring out every paper and letter from its hiding place. It is decidedly a great advantage that those saddlebags have come into use, for in case the mail were robbed, the robber could not find the mail." The people always were finding fault with the mail service, but the *Mail* reported that "The next arrival is awaited with thrilling interest."

Within a few years, the railroad was to take over the job of carrying the mails, affording faster delivery.

#### First Telegraph Service

The Morse telegraph system had been invented in the East, and in 1844 a line ran from Baltimore to Washington, D.C. In the days before the telephone, this was the most rapid means of communication known.

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Someone wrote: "Men dispatch what they may think, or what the news may be. The pen — a pointed wire — the ink is electricity."

The cost of bringing the "lightning wire" as it was called, was figured at \$250 a mile over the mountains, and about \$100 a mile in the Miami Valley. W. C. Howells of Hamilton led the fight to get the wire up the Miami Valley. By August of 1847 Cincinnati received telegraphic news from Philadelphia. This meant that Middletonians could read the dispatches of the Mexican War in the Cincinnati newspapers, which came up every day by mail.

By 1849 telegraph poles were being planted in the Miami country. One Cincinnati newspaper pointed out that while it could have instant communication with New York, that Hamilton, a short distance away, required 3 hours. In May 1850 the O'Reilly office opened. If Middletonians wanted to use the telegraph, they had to go to the county seat. The wires could be forwarded here by stage coach or canal boat. However, the problem was solved at last when in early 1853 the O'Reilly line opened an office here. Middletown was now connected to every major city in the country. Rates were reasonable. The cost of a telegram of ten words to Columbus was 45 cents.

#### Early Newspapers

Since the population of Middletown was small, and as the town had access to the excellent Hamilton papers, which carried some local news, a paper was not started here until 1839. At that time John M. Gallagher, a former writer for the Columbus Journal, came to Middletown to establish its first newspaper, the Middletown Mail. Gallagher had written many pioneer poems which had been widely read, and had received the favorable comment of historian W. C. Venable, who wrote "Footprints of the Ohio Valley."

On April 20, 1839 the first issue of the newspaper appeared. It introduced itself this way: "The Mail. He comes! The herald of a noisy world. News from all nations lumbering at his back." The people of Middletown were much excited about having their own local paper. Editor Gallagher made no elaborate promises, but stated he would carry out the pledges made in his prospectus. The editor said that the first issue was a fair example of the type of paper he would put out, but that he would have more news in future editions, when he received more exchanges. This was the day before large wire press services, and the news was communicated through newspapers which travelled through the slow mails. Editors simply took the news found in other papers and reprinted it.

The Middletown Mail was published every Saturday. The subscription price was \$2 in advance, or \$2.50 within 6 months, or \$3 if not paid within 6 months. Book and job printing were also done.

Before the appearance of the newspaper, the town council had maintained large blackboards on the corners of most of the important streets. With the coming of the Mail the editor declared that "the plank gazettes





of council are out of date," for the people now looked to the *Mail* for the news of the day.

Editor Gallagher bought the paper on which he published his sheet from the Springfield Paper Mill in order to encourage western manufacturers. He said that this paper was as good as any other paper used in the west. The manager of the Springfield mill was astonished at the rapidity with which the paper was published. He wrote, "We last Monday, the 15th, send from Springfield Paper Mill to Middletown one bundle of paper. This day the 20th, we have received the Middletown *Mail* printed on a sheet of paper we sent you."

The papers of that day were intensely partisan, so it was unusual for a paper to declare itself to be independent in politics, but this the editor of the *Mail* did. He wrote that the people of Middleown "felt the importance of having a press, and her citizens of all parties united in an effort to build one . . . We are independent of party, and are proud of it."

The aim of the *Mail* was stated by the Editor as follows: "To keep its readers informed on the goings-on of the ever-changing world." The plant gave employment to five men and four boys and did printing work to an amount of \$2000 a year. Some 34 merchants advertised in its columns.

For about a year the paper was a success, then, in 1839, the owner offered to sell the *Mail* and an assortment of job type capable of publishing a good weekly paper. The paper's staff was reorganized, and the Middletown Farmer appeared and continued publication until January 1840. The editor of the Farmer complained that while he had cut expenses to about \$7 a week, the receipts were still insufficient to meet the payments. One-half of the subscriptions were expiring, and unless these were renewed and 300 more added, the paper could not continue. The presses at Hamilton had the advantage for they had the benefit of legal advertising, job printing, and blanks. Even they had trouble to keep in business. The Editor of the Farmer asked that if anyone owed for printing he send a hog which would be accepted at a fair market price in place of cash.

So it was that Middletown's first presses were shut down. Gallagher left Middletown for a position on the Cincinnati *Gazette*, one of the leading newspapers in Ohio. Middletown was then without a newspaper for 11 years. During this time merchants from time to time would advertise a sale by the use of "dodgers," which they printed and distributed house to house.

On April 26, 1851 Middletown's third newspaper appeared. It was the *Emblem* under the editorship of F. J. Oblinger. Two local men and capable writers, Rev. J. B. Morton and David Heaton, assisted in this enterprise. In the first issue the editor declared, "To the 3,000 journals published in the United States, this morning another one is added . . . no village the size of Middletown should be without a newspaper. The progress of the age demands it." The editor promised that the paper was de-





signed for the home circle and that nothing would be admitted that would taint the morals, and every sketch would carry a lesson.

This new paper caused the Hamilton *Intelligencer* some fear, for they had numerous Middletown subscribers they did not want to lose, and they argued that since the *Emblem* was not a political paper, a citizen should "subscribe to both papers — for one to get a home paper, for the other to see how the political grabblers get on."

It was hoped that everyone would subscribe a dollar, which was the price for one copy for a year. Anyone who obtained 10 subscriptions was given one free. Everyone in the village was sent a copy for inspection and those who did not want to subscribe were asked to return the copy. The paper needed advertising to keep it going. One square inch for one insertion cost 50 cents, a half column ad for 6 months cost \$8.00, while a one column ad for 6 months cost \$20.

Within two years the paper closed its offices, for David Heaton had moved and Rev. Morton was too busy to write for the paper. James Jackson purchased the plant and paper and changed its name to the *Middletown Herald*, but this paper soon suspended publication.

Rev. Lorenzo Dow Harlan, a local Methodist minister, began the publication of the *Middletown Engine* in 1855 and continued it for a year. One of the features of the paper was a novel written by Mrs. Harlan entitled, "Helen or the Chained Mother," which discussed the slavery question. During this period J. J. Pete published a magazine in Middletown called "The Hesperides."

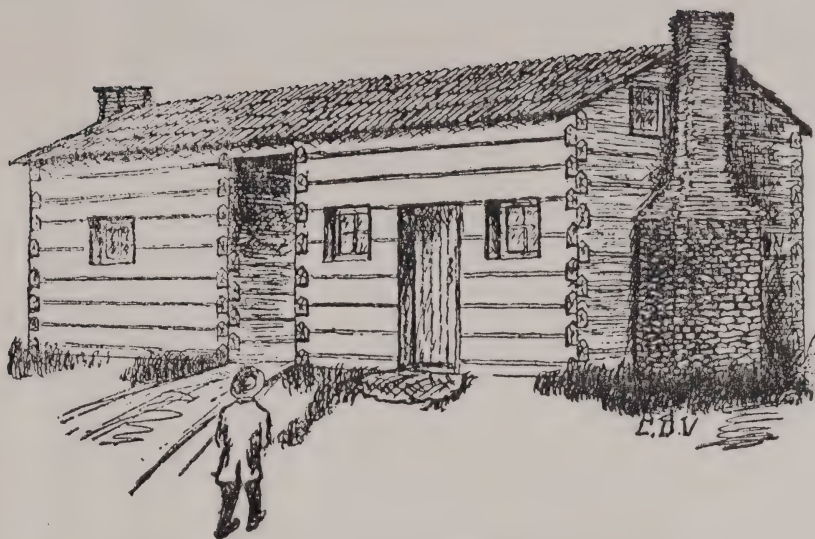
On January 12, 1857, the first issue of the *Western Journal* which was to become Middletown's permanent newspaper, appeared. It was under the management of Charles H. Brock and his brother, A. C. Brock, who published the paper each Thursday. They had purchased the printing equipment of the *Herald*. The new paper sold subscriptions for \$1.50 a year. In 1859 the name was changed to the *Middletown Journal* by which it is still known. The advertising rates were 1 column for 6 months, \$25.

During the Civil War period the newspaper had to suspend publication because it could not obtain newsprint. After the war publication was resumed. During this period, Middletonians had to depend upon the Cincinnati newspapers.

### The First Churches

Pioneer Daniel Doty was a religious man. It was he, who volunteered while living at Columbia, in 1790, to ride through unfriendly Indian territory to Danville, Kentucky to bring Rev. Kemper, a Baptist preacher, to the Miami country. When he returned to settle at the "Little Prairie" from his Boundbrook, New Jersey home in 1796, he saw the need for a church. Hoping to provide religious training for his two small sons, he decided to find another minister. With his aid and that of other pious men, Reverend Daniel Clark, an Old School Baptist, was brought to the area in 1800-1801.





Log cabin home of James Grimes where Methodists first met in this area.

In 1800 a group of pioneers met to cut the logs and build the first church in Middletown. The exact location of this church has never been determined. According to the minutes of the Old School Baptist Association the church was admitted to the organization in 1801, with 11 charter members. Philip Sutton was chosen as messenger. After a quarrel with the Elk Creek and Trenton Church in 1805, the church is lost to history.

In August, 1808, the Baptists of Middletown, the most numerous church group, decided to reorganize. They met at the home of James Heaton on Broad Street, and in 1809 the church was admitted to the Miami Baptist Association. Until 1811 the services were held in the homes of various members.

At that time a committee was appointed to find a site for a new church building. They selected a lot at the present corner of Tytus and Enoch Drive, and erected a frame building 24x50 feet. On the east side of the church and to the rear, a churchyard was laid out for members of the congregation.

The Baptists continued to worship in this church until 1826 when they moved their meeting closer to the homes of the members. The Lemon Township Board of Education purchased the church and yard, which they used for school purposes until 1848. The congregation worshipped at the home of Thomas Royal, at the intersection of Yankee and Main. For many meetings they shared with the other two church groups in early Middletown, the use of the Old Brick schoolhouse.

In 1829 the Baptists decided to build a new church home. They secured the lot on North Main Street and planned a 40 by 60 foot brick church. It was not completed until 1852. In 1854 a new church was erected on this site.





A Virginian, James Grimes, came to the Miami country in 1805. He settled on a farm which is now the site of the Highview subdivision. He built a log cabin near where Wilson School stands. Grimes had fought in the American Revolution and was taken prisoner by the British. Despite heavy fire by the British guards, he escaped on horseback. A carpenter by trade, Grimes was so well known that prior to coming to Ohio he was asked to help build the circular stairway in the Capitol Building in Washington.

Having been given a local preacher's license in Virginia, he organized a Methodist group in Middletown, using his cabin as a meeting place. In 1815 he was ordained as local deacon by Bishop Asbury at the Conference held that year in Lebanon. Bishop Asbury was well known in the West. He traveled some 270,000 miles through the western wilderness. He preached some 16,500 sermons and ordained 4,000 ministers. This minister on horseback became the symbol of Methodism in America.

The Methodist group soon became too large to worship in good Father Grimes' cabin. When the "Old Brick" schoolhouse was completed, (now corner of Main and Manchester), the group was given permission to use the building for Sunday services. They began services here in 1815, and in 1819 they shared it with the Presbyterians, who had just organized but were without a church home. The Baptist society also met here. This was truly the community center of the time.

It was in this "Old Brick" schoolhouse that the first Sunday School was held in the town. The church groups sponsored a combined Sunday School, much like the Vacation Bible School of today.

While the Baptists had built a log cabin church on Little Prairie, and a wood church in north Middletown, it remained for the Methodists to construct the first brick church in downtown Middletown. On a plot of land (now the site of the YMCA) the Methodist Society paid \$50 for a church site. A one-room brick building, 40 x 60 feet, was erected. On the north side were two doors, one for the women and one for the men. A wooden partition divided the worshippers inside the church. Back of the church a little bell was hung—the first to call people to worship in the village. Reverend T. A. Morris became its first pastor. The simple building with unplastered walls and rough board benches was used until 1849 when it was sold for \$600 and converted to school purposes. In 1849 a new two-story brick structure 42 by 67 feet rose on North Broad at a cost of almost \$4,000.

On April 6, 1819 the Miami Presbytery meeting at Lebanon, Ohio, was presented with a petition asking for the privilege of organizing the First Presbyterian Church of Middletown, Ohio. The request was granted and Rev. Francis Monfort was chosen as minister.

At first the new church had a difficult time to get started. There were only 12 members in Middletown, five had come by letter from the Dick's Creek Presbyterian Church. At first the group was very small, but determined. They met at the "Old Brick" schoolhouse. Rev. Monfort de-





voted much time to building up his new church. By 1828 they had enough members to begin to think about a church home. They purchased land owned by Daniel Doty. The site is now being used by the Lutheran Church on Broad Street. A small brick church 35 by 45 feet was erected. The church was very simple with the total cost for furniture and construction running to \$1100. Much of the labor had been donated.

In 1840 came to Middletown an outstanding minister and educator, John B. Morton. For many years he led the congregation, now numbering 100. He purchased the home of Dr. Peter Vanderveer, now the home of the McKnight Kinnes, who recently moved the house to Thorn Hill Lane. Built in 1825, this is Middletown's most historic home.

In this home he carried on the many missions of a minister. Here many Middletonians were married. Here a private school for boys was conducted by the minister. Here he wrote his famous memorial sermon delivered on the Sunday following president Lincoln's assassination.

By 1856 the congregation was in a new brick church home. In 1867 the Presbyterians purchased the first pipe organ to be used in a church in Middletown.

Detailed stories of early church life in Middletown may be found in two recent books: Wilfred D. Vorhis, *The Story of a Church*, and Mary Doty Dell, *The First Baptist Church*. Both of these are excellent accounts of church life in early Middletown.

#### First Schools in Middletown

When the pioneers made their first settlement at Columbia, they made plans for the education of their children. Knowing that education was needed in this wilderness land, they set up a school in one of the block-houses of Fort Miami. A young gentleman from New Hampshire, Mr. Frey, opened the first school at the fort, which when built, had been designed for this purpose. This was the first school taught in the Miami Valley.

The first settlers of Middletown planned for a school. Since the idea of using public funds for the support of schools had not yet been accepted by the people of our country, the first school in Middletown was a pay school. In 1805 the first such school was opened in the Vail Mills on West Third Street. Here in a room in a woolen factory Master Beers instructed the young pioneers.

In 1806 a log cabin at the junction of Yankee Road and Main Street was converted to school use. Half of the cabin served as a home for the teacher, Marsha Wilson. Another private school was soon opened.

In these early log cabin schools, the children had few comforts. The benches were made of logs which the pioneers had split in half, with the straight side smoothed by an ax. Books were kept along side the pupil, so the crude benches served as seat and desk. The boys often lined their pants with buckskin to protect themselves against splinters as well as the teacher's hickory stick.

The arrangement of the early schoolrooms was simple. The open fire



at one end of the room provided heat for the 20 by 30 foot building. At the other end was found a small platform on which was placed the master's desk. Placed before this platform was the recitation bench on which the class section which was to recite came before the teacher. The teacher was kept busy with these recitations for all eight grades met in the same room in the early days. There were no grade schools at this time. While one class was reciting, the rest of the pupils were at work on long assignments. Around the wall were boards, painted black, on which the children would cipher.

The early school term usually ran for 12 weeks, but if the money gave out before then, the teacher would close school and go somewhere else. Teachers often lived with the families of the children they were teaching — this was part of the instructor's pay. The teachers were paid so little that they could not afford to pay board and room.

Since bells were scarce in the West, the school was called to order by the teacher's pounding a stick on the side of the school building. To add a little gaiety to the drab pioneer school life, usually during the year, there would be one lock-out, when the teacher would find the schoolhouse door barred to him. The master could gain admittance only by promising a treat, which might consist of a big apple or a cake of delicious maple sugar. On the whole the pioneer teacher, known as the master, was highly respected.

The pioneer school curriculum consisted of the 3 R's — reading, writing, and arithmetic. School supplies were meager indeed. Unruled paper, called foolscap was used sparingly. Each pupil obtained a ruler from a friendly carpenter, and with a bar-lead pencil he would carefully rule his own precious paper. A goose quill or feather made an excellent pen, and each pupil had to learn to use these pens as part of writing instruction. The teacher mixed the ink from ink powder. Blotting sand served to dry up the ink. Each child had to make his own copybook, which consisted of folded sheets of foolscap, cut into uniform size, stitched together and bound with a brown paper cover. Penmanship was considered so important that special schools for teaching this subject were set up. Ciphering was done with a slate and slate pencil.

While as early as 1806 the State Legislature had passed an act to provide a common school system for Ohio, it was many years before schools were open to all. In 1825 the school law provided that townships be laid off in school districts to be managed by Boards of Education. A tax was to be levied for schools. In line with this law in 1827 School District Number 3 was created to include Middletown and the adjoining area in Lemon Township. In Middletown, however, there were still no free schools. Any parent who wished to send a child to school had to pay tuition.

There was a public school, however, where by the payment of a fee any child was admitted. When Stephen Vail laid out Middletown he set aside the southeast corner of what is now Main and Manchester for a





"public purpose." He thought that this might be the site of a courthouse, and that this might be the county seat. However, it soon became clear that this would never happen. Since the site for a schoolhouse was considered a "public purpose," the School Trustees claimed the lot. Upon it in 1815 they built the first brick building in Middletown, which became known as the "Old Brick." This building was 20 by 30 feet, one story high. At one end was a huge fireplace, later to be replaced by a stove.

From 1835 to 1838 there was a movement throughout Ohio in favor of a free, public school system. It was felt that a child, regardless of the wealth of the parent, was entitled to a common school education. In response to this demand the Ohio Legislature appointed Samuel Lewis, Superintendent of Public Schools, and gave him a state school fund. Under this stimulus the "Old Brick" became a free, public school in 1837. Joseph Gailbreath became the first teacher in Middletown to be paid from public funds.

Many objected to the free school. Some did not believe that a person with no children, should be forced to pay a school tax. It was not this opposition which forced the closing of the free school. It was the Panic of 1837 which hit Ohio and which caused a decrease of tax money. The people again had to pay tuition to keep the school open. In 1840 the free school was again open, and 110 children enrolled.

To fill the gap between the elementary school and college, there developed the private high school, known as an academy. The term high school in early times meant a private school. In 1835 a fine teacher came to Middletown. He was Nathaniel Furman. He established an academy which he called Middletown High School. He was once described as a man with "a head filled with learning's lore and heart filled with goodness." His school was so well known that students came from other states to be enrolled.

Master Furman was austere and severe in his methods. He insisted on good discipline. If the boys came to school with dirty hands, the professor used water and soap on them and substituted a corn cob for a scrub brush. As the dirt came off so did some of the skin, but the boys who had their hands scrubbed by the master, took care to see that they were clean thereafter. An old bell in front of Furman's academy, located on the west side of Broad, was hung between two posts, some 20 feet high.

Middletonians were proud of their high school, and the local editor remarked: "We have in Middletown an excellent high school under the preceptorship of an able and experienced teacher." Assisting Furman was his wife and Lucretia Williamson.

Vacation months were July and August, and the first session began the first Monday in September. The tuition varied from \$6.50 to \$10.50 for a term of 22 weeks, based on the age and studies of the scholar. This early high school ran 44 weeks a year. An evening school was operated for those who wished to do additional work or for adults. Regular lectures in grammar, natural philosophy, chemistry and other subjects were





given. These were free to students of the academy. Others had to pay \$5 a session.

In July registration was begun, and those who wished to register for the fall term were asked to do so. Furman pointed out that it was to the advantage of the parents to pay the tuition in advance, to start the children at the commencement of the term, and insist on regular attendance.

Students who excelled in their studies were permitted to address an assembly of citizens at the end of the session. In 1840 this examination of students was to begin on January 27th and continue for a week. Any local citizens interested in the cause of education were invited to attend these examinations. This class was "of young gentlemen of good moral character and superior talents" and when they had passed their examinations, they were qualified to enter the study of law or medicine without "incurring the expenses of any other collegiate course."

Nathaniel Furman was so successful in Middletown that he decided to go on to the larger city of Hamilton, where he started another fine academy which he operated until his death in 1858. In 1851 Middleown High School opened the winter session under the guidance of a new principal. He was Rev. John B. Morton, pastor of the Presbyterian Church. He conducted his school in his home and in the church rooms, which were near.

At this same time Master Bridges was teacher at the public school, the "Old Brick." He sometimes had some pretty rough scholars, and one time the boys tore a corner out of the schoolhouse to get in for mischievous purposes. Bridges was handy with the hickory stick as were most teachers of that time, and stern and severe in his punishments.

There was a great amount of competition between the public school and the private school of Rev. Morton. The phrases in common use at the time "Morton's Cats" and "Bridges' Rats," give some idea of the rivalry between the students enrolled in the two schools. The private and public school competed for the students of the town. The private school was able to offer a more difficult course and a more classical program. The private school offered a program for elementary as well as high school. However, the public school at first offered only elementary education.

In 1847 the famous Akron Law was passed by the State Legislature. It provided for the election of a Board of Education to provide a free, public school system from grades 1 to 12. In 1852 Middletown took advantage of this law and separated from the township school system. District Number 5 became the Middletown Public School System. In 1855 the first Board of Education was chosen: William Oglesby, Stephen Griffin, Edward Jones, Joseph Sutphin, and William Marshall.

The Board operated two public school buildings. One was a new one, which had replaced "Old Brick" in 1854. Built on the same site, this new schoolhouse had four rooms. The other was the old brick church vacated by the Methodists in 1849 on Manchester Avenue. These were

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the only two school buildings in Middletown until South was erected in 1871. If additional space was needed, rooms were rented in the town. The private schools continued to take care of the education of many of the young people.

In 1857 the Board of Education met and began a new *Minutes* book, which is the earliest official record in existence. At that time the board employed five teachers. There was a graded course of study. The principal taught the older students the following subjects: orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, algebra, geometry, Latin, composition and elocution. While there was no high school at the time, the principal was teaching some high school subjects. The principal was paid \$700 a year, and the teachers were paid from \$20 to \$30 a month. Books used were: McGuffey Readers; Rays' Arithmetic and Algebra; Colton and Fitch's Geography; Pineo Grammar; Bullion, Latin Grammar; Goodrich's History of U.S.; McGuffey Speller; Comstock, Philosophy; Milton's Paradise Lost. The study of German was introduced in 1860. Music had been added in 1859, and Chemistry in 1860. In 1860 the Board appointed the first superintendent of schools.

#### Some Early Physicians

While Dr. Peter Vanderveer was not the first doctor in Middletown, he was the most skilled and best trained physician in the early Middletown period. Dr. Carlton Waldo was the first doctor to locate in the town. He came here shortly after the War of 1812, and remained until his death in 1831. He was a native of New Hampshire.

The beloved physician of the early years was Dr. Vanderveer, who was born in Somerset County, New York, March 12, 1788. His father was Colonel Henry Vanderveer, a substantial farmer who had gained his military title in helping put down the Whiskey Rebellion. The family which had emigrated from Holland in 1645 was very active in the American Revolution.

After receiving a college education, Peter Vanderveer began the study of medicine and surgery in 1817. He attended New York Hospital and received a certificate. His diploma was issued by the Medical Society of the State of New York, July 9, 1818. After graduation, he decided to make the West his home. With his horse, saddle, and pill bags he started for Ohio. After arriving in Middletown in 1819, he took a trip to Indiana, but returned to this town within a few months and opened up his practice.

Since his patients were scattered all over the surrounding country, he spent much of his time in the saddle. He visited homes where bridle-paths were marked by blazing. Day or night he never refused to answer a call. As his practice was on both sides of the Miami River, he had to cross it often. Since there was no bridge across the river he had to try to catch the single ferry, but many times the ferry was not at work. Then Dr. Vanderveer had to swim his horse across the river to reach a patient.





In 1822 he married Mary Ann Dickey, who died after two years, leaving a son, Ferdinand. In 1826 Dr. Vanderveer remarried. Although he had been an attendant of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, he joined the Presbyterian Church of Middletown in 1837 and became an elder.

At the time he came to Middletown, there were few doctors who were graduates of medical schools in the valley. The fact that he had attended Medical school as well as hospital lectures, caused the public to hold him in high regard. The long hours, and the exposures and hardships of a pioneer physician undermined his health. On January 17, 1861 he died at his home in Middletown.

Also practicing in early Middletown was Dr. Andrew Campbell who was born and reared at Franklin, Ohio. He took advantage of his limited educational facilities and studied the classics and sciences. At 21 he entered the office of Dr. Otho Evans at Franklin as an apprentice, and then took the usual course at the Medical College of Ohio. In the spring of 1831 he opened an office in Middletown, and practiced here until 1848. During these years his reputation grew, and many wanted to study medicine by working in his office. Some of those whom he taught were Dr. Samuel Hyndman, Dr. W. W. Caldwell, and Dr. John Corson, who began the practice of medicine in Middletown in 1863. As his practice grew too large, Dr. Campbell went to Hamilton to find a smaller practice. It was during the "cholera summer" of 1849 and the small pox outbreak of the following winter, and the Doctor became so worn out that he contracted several diseases and died in 1851.

Middletown had much sickness in early times. The people lived in crude cabins, which were overcrowded with very large families. The hardships of clearing the land by the men and the incessant childbearing of the pioneer women was more than many human beings could endure over a period of time. Many became weakened and contracted the frontier scourge, tuberculosis which they referred to as "consumption."

Much of the lowland around the town was poorly drained. In 1837 Edward Jones wrote: This town is situated on the river and this valley is noted for the fever . . . . This fever was malaria. Many farmers such as David Williamson, the author's great-great grandfather, refused to locate on the river farms, but instead chose the highland areas of West Middletown. Many chose the higher lands for fear of miasma. It was thought that miasma was the cause of malaria, the fever Jones referred to above. Miasma was an unpleasant smelling damp air flowing out of undrained areas and swamps, which was supposed to carry dangerous disease germs. Actually, it was the mosquitoes living in the swamp which carried the common disease of the Miami Valley, chills and fever. Another time Jones related: "It has been a very healthy summer, but it is getting somewhat sickley, there is a great many fevers in this vicinity."

One of the most dreaded diseases, and one for which the doctors were able to do very little was the cholera. Middletown suffered from these





early plagues. In 1850 a serious epidemic hit the town. This item appeared in the Hamilton paper: "Wed. noon. We learn from a gentleman just from Middletown that the cholera is raging there very badly; there being ten deaths within a few days."

Death came often in early Middletown. Large families were expected on the frontier. Ten to fifteen children were common. The early records of Butler County, including those of Middletown, show that almost half the deaths were of children under 5 years of age. Women between the ages of 20 and 30, made up one-eighth of all deaths. Since the women with children on the frontier had the most heavy burden of work, they died younger than the men. A large family, plus all the hand work involved in preparing large meals, washing clothes, caring for large families and carrying on household industries took its toll. There were few old maids, and old bachelors were most uncommon and unpopular. In the old cemeteries the story is told on monuments. Often one man outlived three wives. The little markers show the numerous children who died in a family.

The first man to be buried in Middletown was named Watts. Through his fearlessness as a hunter he had become known all over the young settlement. As he was out hunting, a bear jumped him and killed him in the fight. In 1798 his grave was dug on a bluff along the east bank of the Miami. A box of rough boards was his coffin, and his hunting garments his shroud. His grave served as the beginning of a common burial ground. To mark the grave of each of the dead a locust tree was planted, and thus the grounds became a beautiful spot. Slowly this bluff was eaten away by the river. In a great flood in 1903 the graveyard was destroyed completely, and this silent town of the dead disappeared forever.

In North Middletown the Baptists had a burial ground, which has since disappeared. The Middletown Cemetery came next in 1827 and in it are buried many of the pioneers. Beautiful Woodside Cemetery was chartered in 1891.



# A Developing Economic System



During the pre-Civil War days, 1830 to 1860, pioneer Middletown grew into a town with a clearly developed economic system. Starting in 1830 with a population of only 530, the town in 1860 had grown to 2,070.

The first large industry to develop in this period was that of meat packing, one peculiarly adapted to early Middletown. The pioneers found that hogs could roam the woods and live on mast, consisting of acorns, hickory nuts, and other small nuts. The hogs which lived on this diet rarely weighed over 100 pounds, but the housewives believed that the meat was sweeter, if the hog was not so fat. When there was a surplus of corn, the pioneer fed his hogs corn for a few weeks before butchering, and it was soon discovered that corn-fed hogs made the best meat and brought the best market price. Packers began to stipulate that corn-fed pork was desired; a typical advertisement read: "Wanted: A quantity of corn-fed pork." As the years went on larger and larger hogs were produced.

In 1831 pork packing began as a business in Hamilton. Then two Boston men, Gardner Phipps and Sumner Hudson came to Middletown, and began the pork packing business here in the winter of 1835-1836. F. J. Tytus soon became a partner of Mr. Phipps and the firm of Phipps and Tytus was organized.

In 1837 Edward Jones, a carpenter by trade, came from Massachusetts to Middletown. In the spring and summer he carried on the carpenter's trade, but in the winter he packed pork for Mr. Phipps. By 1840 he obtained a fourth interest in the business. From then on the pork packing business developed. Middletown's growth as a pork center was made possible by the Miami-Erie Canal, which afforded cheap transportation. The canal led to the pork marketing center of the U.S. at that time, Cincinnati, then called "Porkopolis."

By 1840 Middletown had three porkhouses, which every winter packed between 12,000 and 15,000 hogs or about \$200,000 worth of pork products, the town's main export. The pig, actually a little pork factory,



# A. B. C. of the Game of Life



...the first step in the game of life is to know your own mind. This is not a simple task, for the mind is a complex and mysterious organ. It is the seat of our thoughts, feelings, and desires. To understand the mind is to understand the human condition. This is the first lesson of the game of life.

...the second step is to know your own strengths and weaknesses. This is a process of self-discovery that takes time and effort. It involves looking at your achievements and failures, and understanding the factors that led to them. This is the second lesson of the game of life.

...the third step is to know your own goals and dreams. This is a process of vision-creation that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the future and imagining the life you want to live. This is the third lesson of the game of life.

...the fourth step is to know your own values and principles. This is a process of self-reflection that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the things that matter most to you and the actions that you want to take. This is the fourth lesson of the game of life.

...the fifth step is to know your own limitations and constraints. This is a process of self-awareness that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the things that you cannot do and the things that you must do. This is the fifth lesson of the game of life.

...the sixth step is to know your own opportunities and challenges. This is a process of self-assessment that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the things that you can do and the things that you must overcome. This is the sixth lesson of the game of life.

...the seventh step is to know your own resources and assets. This is a process of self-inventory that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the things that you have and the things that you need. This is the seventh lesson of the game of life.

...the eighth step is to know your own responsibilities and obligations. This is a process of self-accountability that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the things that you must do for others and the things that others must do for you. This is the eighth lesson of the game of life.

...the ninth step is to know your own strengths and weaknesses. This is a process of self-discovery that takes time and effort. It involves looking at your achievements and failures, and understanding the factors that led to them. This is the ninth lesson of the game of life.

...the tenth step is to know your own goals and dreams. This is a process of vision-creation that takes time and effort. It involves looking at the future and imagining the life you want to live. This is the tenth lesson of the game of life.

converted raw corn into meat. The meat represented more value in a small package, and cut transportation costs on the corn, bringing more profit to the farmer. At that time the Miami Valley was the wheat and corn belt of the West. This was an excellent corn-producing region, and here some of the finest hogs were bred and raised. Later the introduction of the Poland-China hog at the Shaker settlement near Lebanon brought fame and wealth to the region, and inspired the only monument to a hog in the United States. It is located near Blue Ball.

Some of the largest hogs in the United States have been bred near Middletown. These hogs reached the fantastic weight of 700 to 1200 pounds at 3 or 4 years of age. One hog, owned by Daniel Leibee, weighed 1,650 pounds. This hog was taken as far as New Orleans by boat and exhibited by Daniel Bowman; thousands of farmers paying ten cents to see it. During this period hogs were driven down the streets of Middletown, and everyone had to make way for the swine, when perhaps as many as 100 would be in one drove. Other hogs were brought in by wagon. The town was filled with hogs and around these hogs, Jones built a large, prosperous business. "Jones' Hams" were prized in the best hotels in the United States and were as famous then as the Armco trademark is today.

Hogs not packed in Middletown were taken by canal boat to Cincinnati for packing. Hugh Vail, son of the town's founder, started a pork packing business along the bank of the canal, and also operated a grain elevator there.

Edward Jones became the leading pork packer of Middletown. His letters give an excellent picture of Middletown from 1836 to 1850. When Jones first arrived in Middletown he was paid \$30 a month, and had to pay \$2.50 a week board. In one letter he described the corn fields:

"The season is said to be backward, but I have seen corn as high as my head in the gardens. . . . In the cornfields it is as high as in the east when it sashes out. I have seen the cornfields side by side extending for more than two miles. It is a very common thing to see 40 to 60 acres in one field, and I saw a field that I was told contained 250 acres."

In 1850 Edward Jones wrote to his father: "I have been at work here in the Porkhouse nearly 4 months and shall remain sometime. We have been very busy for 5 or 6 weeks—cut from 150 to 250 per day but shall get nearly through this week. Sumner Hudson is here from Boston and is having a lot of pork packed." In the same year he stated that pork was selling for 6½ cents a pound. The price of pork varied from year to year.

In Middletown during this period these men were engaged in the pork packing industry: Edward Jones, Hugh Vail, G. Phipps, J. S. Iglehart, G. L. Wrenn, W. B. Oglesby, S. V. Curtis, and S. A. Wrenn.

In an old ledger kept by Francis Tytus from 1836 to 1840 a glimpse of his pork business can be seen. The ledger was kept systematically,





and contained over 70 separate accounts. Many of the old settlers had accounts with Tytus who furnished them with their pork supply. He shipped to the East also. In some cases Tytus bartered pork for some things which he needed. He traded pork for candles from Joseph Hilt. He bartered pork for groceries from Mitchell's store. Buchanan gave him cloth for pork.

### Flour and Whiskey

Pork was not the only processing industry in the 1840's in Middletown. Corn was made into whiskey, and wheat into flour. These items too had a good market, and with pork represented the town's major exports according to reliable canal office statistics.

In 1840 in this industrial area there were still several grist mills which ground wheat and corn. When wheat was ground into flour its bulk was reduced and it became more valuable, reducing transportation costs in relation to salable value. Poynter's grist mill used 150 bushels of grain a day, and 2,500 barrels of flour were manufactured each year. Dickey's mill on the canal lock at Amanda packed 4,000 barrels of flour a year, and ground 57,000 bushels of other grain a year. John Mumma, who operated Aaron Vail's old mill on the west side of the river was a leading producer. Banker's mill on the Miami River packed about 3,000 barrels of flour a year, and Clapp's mill could produce 86,000 barrels of flour a year.

The grist mill, under the management of Sutphin and Martin, and later Reynolds and Sutphin, was located near the site of the old Vail grist mill. It became the center of grain trade in Middletown. It was here that the great wagons drawn by 6 or 8 horses brought grain from 20 to 30 miles away. As there were no grain elevators, the wagons had to wait until they could be unloaded. Often the drivers would have to wait all night.

Enoch's distillery at Manchester, used 50,000 bushels of corn a year in the making of whiskey. Dickey's distillery at Amanda was also well patronized. One of the early stills located near Middletown was described as follows: "It consists of a Still house with the stills, tubs, etc., in good order calculated to run two barrels a day. The Still is amply supplied with fine water from a spring." From 1830 to 1860 the average yearly output as shown by canal statistics for export, was approximately 15,000 barrels. Broom corn was also grown in this area, and brooms were manufactured by S. Leonard. Several thousand brooms were shipped down the old canal.

Along the canal were built large forwarding houses. Farmers stored their goods in these houses, and received warehouse receipts. As soon as the goods were sold by the commission merchant the farmer collected his money. J. S. Iglehart and Company bought grain crops, particularly wheat, barley and corn. This company also acted as commission and forwarding merchants. John Mumma and Samuel Weikel owned a warehouse located on the canal, where a person was in constant at-



tendance. They received all kinds of goods which they shipped to market by the Miami-Erie. From these houses were shipped such local products as wheat, flour, corn, rye, oats, peas, beans, clover and grass seed, barley, butter, pork, lard, whiskey, yarn, cheese, pig iron, merchandise, wool, hides, pelts, pottery, timber, brooms, and stone. Here are the prices on the Middletown market for Dec. 14, 1839:

Flour .....	\$3.50	barrel
Whiskey .....	.25	gallon
Wheat .....	.56	bushel
Corn (Shelled) .....	.31	bushel
Eggs .....	.10	dozen
Potatoes .....	.37	bushel
Wood .....	2.00	cord
Nails .....	.09	pound
Linseed Oil .....	1.50	gallon

### Economic Life

During this early period of economic development, the mid-western town was largely self sufficient. Skilled tradesmen supplied most of the needs of the community, and the farmer looked to them to help him with his work. The blacksmith forged his plows, spades, axes and other tools. The tanner made his leather, and the miller ground his grain. With the aid of these artisans the farmer could devote his time to farming. Likewise in the town each man did his own particular job, and hired others to do the rest of his work. Unlike the pioneer, the workman began to do what he could do most efficiently, and a simple division of labor developed. Since transportation costs were much higher in those days, mass production was unknown. It was cheaper for a man to locate a small shop or manufacturing unit in a town and supply the local market. This represented a new step in industrial development. The small manufacturing unit developed. Men became more dependent upon each other, and upon the industrial growth of the community.

In business this led to a change in organization. The pioneer merchant had operated his own store. He closed it when he went East to buy more goods. This merchant soon saw that with two men, the store could stay open all the time, and the partners could take turns going East. Two men could more easily save money to open a business, and working together they could make more money. This type of business development became known as a partnership. There were many such arrangements in this period.

### Manufacture of Leather

The tan yard became an important business in Middletown. One of these yards has been described as having "21 vats, frame bark and mill house, 56 feet long and 26 feet wide and a frame beam house 20 by 24 feet." Daniel Leibee ran a tan yard. He kept on hand a large stock of leather goods consisting of sole and upper leather for the making of shoes, calf and kid skins, sheep and hog skins, harness, bridle, bag





leather, rawhide traces. He bought hides and skins, paying 5 cents per pound for beef hides, and 8 cents per pound for calf skins. In tanning he used white and black oak bark. He offered to purchase 200 cords of good white and black oak bark at \$5 a cord. The bark was measured and due allowances made for excessive thick bark. As soon as Leibee finished work on some leather he advertised, "150 side heavy sole leather just finished and for sale." Since horses were used for transportation and work, good saddles and harness were in demand. Mr. Crawford operated a saddle, harness, and trunk manufactory.

#### **Bricks Made Here**

The brick yard was operated by Joseph Leibee. Since the town was growing this building material was needed. The first brick building in Middletown had been the old schoolhouse erected in 1815, and the first brick home was built by Jonathan Tullis. Soon other brick homes were being built. In one month it is recorded that Leibee burned 200,000 bricks at his kiln, and in a season he often produced almost 2,000,000 bricks, the brick yard containing as many as 200,000 bricks on hand at one time. They sold at \$5.60 to \$8.00 a thousand. This firm could not meet the increasing demand, for the local newspaper pointed out that Middletown needed over 5,000,000 bricks a year for building.

#### **The Village Blacksmith and Others**

"By Hammer and Hand, All Arts Do Stand." So advertised Samuel McQuiety, one of the early blacksmiths, who did all kinds of work in his line. He kept improving his shop and the business grew rapidly. Cramer and Lafore, two other blacksmiths did all kinds of general smithing such as ironing wagons and carriages, plows, sleds, sleighs; shoeing horses; repairing gun locks and edged tools such as drawing knives, plain bits, cutting box and butcher knives; elliptic springs and carriages and wagons finished throughout; and repairing of all kinds of brassware. Middletown's tinner was John Reis. Besides working throughout the town he also ran a shop where he sold all kinds of tinware.

Thomas Wilson came to Middletown, bought the cabinet manufactory of Isaac Vadder, and made furniture. He had a shop near Main Street, and kept on hand ready-made tables, bedsteads, bureaus, and other articles of furniture. He made furniture to order for anyone who desired it. Later Mr. Wilson went into the undertaking business as a sideline. Furniture and undertaking were quite a common combination of businesses in this period of history.

Tombstones were made and sold in Middletown by E. B. Potter and Jesse Vinson. These men did all kinds of stonework.

#### **Early Tobacco Industry**

Along Main Street was Middletown's tobacco manufactory owned by Sam Weigle, who kept in stock the best quality of Spanish and half Spanish common cigar. He kept chewing tobacco of every kind for





the gentlemen and snuff for the ladies. Sweet Cavendish, Virginia Twist, snuff and dry tobacco were sold by the pound. He used home-grown tobacco for making part of his cigars.

Before the white man came, the Indians had grown tobacco in the Miami Valley. Tobacco growing developed rapidly here because it was a product which could be packed and shipped at a profit, for much of it could be transported in a small space, and it commanded a good price. In 1839 Ohio had risen to 7th place among the states in the production of tobacco. Seedleaf, after its introduction in the 1830's, became a favorite among the farmers and was raised widely in the Dick's Creek Valley. This tobacco made good cigar filler. Tobacco soon became a leading export of this area, and from 1840 to 1860 the average export by way of the canal was about 300,000 pounds a year.

Most of the crockery used in Middletown consisted of yellow and brown ware, which was useful but not in the least artistic. John R. Russell owned the Middletown Pottery, which made crocks, dishes of all sizes, jugs, pitchers and on the whole a fine assortment of useful crockery.

### Wagons and Carriages

As the forests in this area contained much hickory, fine carriages and wagons were manufactured in this part of the valley. West Elkton gained fame as a carriage manufacturing town. The village wagon maker, and there were many of them in Middletown, made stout wagons, which carried the farm products to market, and brought back needed articles to the farm home. The wagons were often painted red or some other bright color. Six oaken bows were pushed into the staples of the wagon bed, and over these were stretched white canvas, which was tied to the body of the wagon with twine. The cover protected the farmer's produce on the way to market. On the back of the wagon was a feed box. A big board across the front of the wagon served as a seat, and over the rough board were placed cushions or old quilts. Many different kinds of carriages were manufactured by Silas Deeds, who employed skilled workmen to make carriages of the latest eastern fashions. Carriages made of the best and selected local materials sold for \$150 to \$400.

### Shoemakers

Even though almost all homes had a cobbler's kit; most men preferred to let the shoemakers do the work. At first the wandering journeyman shoemaker traveled from home to home, where he was given shelter, food and a few day's work. After he had repaired the shoes for the family, and made as many new pairs as were needed, he was off to the next house. The early shoes, made of heavy leather, lasted a long time. But soon shops were set up in Middletown, and the farmer came to town to the shop to have his shoes made. The shoemaker's shop was not an elaborate affair. In it was the cobbler's bench with a leather seat; on the bench were the hammer, last, sewing awl, lapstone, shoe knife, shoe



pegs, shoemakers wax, and thread. David Steel, Dayton Lummis, and Joseph Sheaf were shoemakers. A mammoth boot told the customers the location of a shoe store, which kept on hand a supply of boots, shoes, ladies' Kid and Morocco slippers of every description. These last were made of the best Eastern and French leather and were guaranteed to be styled in the latest fashion.

### Tailors

C. C. and J. H. Mitchell were tailors who supplied their customers with the latest fashions from the East. Kerr and Lindsey, who had operated a store in the East for many years, opened a tailor shop in Middletown, where they furnished their customers with the latest fashions. Michael Presler was another good tailor in town. The tailor made the clothes for the well-to-do persons, and for some professional men who wore expensive broadcloth suits. If a farmer could afford one broadcloth suit for his wedding, he thought he was a lucky man. The minister wore a long-tailed coat made in the tailor's shop. Then James Bowman manufactured hats for the ladies and gentlemen of the town.

In 1846 Henry Howe, Ohio's famous early historian, visited Middletown to compile material for his now famous collection. This is his description of the town at that time:

"Middletown is twelve miles northeast of Hamilton, and twenty below Dayton, in a rich and beautiful country. The Miami canal runs east of the central part of the town, and the Miami river bounds it on the west. It is connected with Dayton and Cincinnati and with West Alexandria, in Preble county by turnpikes. The Warren County canal enters the main canal at this town. Two or three miles above, a dam is thrown across the Miami from which a connecting feeder supplies the canal. This work furnishes much water, which, with little expense, can be increased and used to a great advantage. There are within three miles of Middletown eight flouring mills on the river and canal. It contains 16 mercantile stores, 2 forwarding houses, 1 grist mill, and 1 woolen factory . . ."

### Middletown's Early Banks

Middletown now had the Main Street business section. It had skilled workmen with well equipped shops. It had pork packing houses. It had several small industries. There was one thing which the town lacked. It had no banking and credit facilities. Local citizens knew this was a great need, for a bank adds an important dimension to any community. Towns grow not on actual cash, but on credit. This credit enables men to build houses, businesses and industries. This in turn builds a better and richer community. A bank is the economic backbone of a town.

Butler County had only one bank, but it had a long, and difficult history. This bank was called the Bank of Hamilton and was incorporated by an act of the Ohio legislature in 1817. The men who





served as its first directors were John Reily, James McBride, John Woods, William Blair, Jesse Corwin, Andrew McCleary, and James Rossman. With a paid up capital of \$35,000 the bank opened under the leadership of John Reily. In 1818 the bank was forced to close because of making bad loans. The organization was kept intact, and held annual meetings to keep its charter. In 1835 additional stock was subscribed, and the bank again opened for business under a new Board of Directors; but the bank was weakened by the Panic of 1837, and was forced to close in 1842. Middletonians had used this bank, and among its patrons was Francis J. Tytus, who wrote in his ledger that he owed "a note at 60 days in Hamilton Bank—\$501.37, July 30, 1839." Some local business men went to Cincinnati to obtain credit, but this was too far away.

A local bank was needed for day-to-day business. Credit was badly needed by both business men and farmers. Then, too, men needed a place where they could keep money in safety. Local merchants were often asked to keep money, but this method of banking was slow and inconvenient.

At this time, fortunately for the citizens of Middletown, there appeared on the scene two men, William Oglesby and George Barnitz. This happy partnership was to provide what Middletown needed most—a local bank. Daniel Doty had the foresight to make a pioneer settlement at this site. Stephen Vail laid out a town on the banks of the river, and began its industrial development. It was now up to Oglesby and Barnitz to provide the economic backbone of the community. Their bank, as well as their financial genius and guidance in every major local business and industrial undertaking, was to provide the basis for Industrial Middletown.

These men had the vision that made Middletown a city. Energy plus perseverance and business ability was possessed by these men. Oglesby had the flash and drive to present an idea to the public. Barnitz was more conservative and stayed more in the background, planning and executing. This made an excellent team.

William Oglesby, one of the pioneer merchants of Middletown, was born in 1815; he was one of a family of nine children. His grandfather and father had been sickle makers in the days when sickles were made by hand. The Oglesby family, becoming tired of the civilized life of Chester County, Pennsylvania, decided to move West. In 1818 they emigrated to Preble County, Ohio. Here William received an education in the typical log house school. As at the age of 13, it was necessary for the boy to find a way to make his own living, his father obtained a job for him in the store of Captain Hiram Potter of Jacksonburg. The family discussed whether William should leave home; William himself made some objections. However, after he had worked a few days on the farm, clearing a new piece of land from roots and stumps, he de-





cided to work in the store. He put on his best homespun and left home. For two or three years he served as a boy of all work, and then went to Middletown to enter the store of Jonathan Martin. After Martin's death, the business was carried on by Tytus and Wrenn. Soon Mr. Oglesby became a partner of Tytus, and eventually took over the store at the southwest corner of Main and Central.

In 1840 Oglesby and his brother brought a stock of goods from Philadelphia. The goods were loaded on a steamer called the "Troy," at Pittsburgh, and sent to Cincinnati, but on the way, the ship sank. Unfortunately there was no insurance on the goods. A part of the merchandise was fished out and dried, repacked and sent to Cincinnati, thence to Dayton. Oglesby decided to try a store in Sidney, but after three months he sold out. After working for two years in Urbana, he went to Philadelphia, where he served as a clerk in a dry-goods store. At the end of six months he married Miss R. S. Barnitz of Hanover, Pennsylvania, who was the sister of his later partner. They were married in 1845.

In 1858 George Barnitz came from Hanover, Pennsylvania to Middletown. This twenty-six year old man obtained a job as a clerk at Leabee's store. Across the street, Oglesby was clerking in Martin's store. The two men became friends.

In 1842 these two men with only a few dollars in their pockets, but faith in the future, started a new business in the old Martin store. The partnership of Oglesby and Barnitz ran a mercantile and grain buying business. Farmers patronized the store and developed deep faith in the square-dealing and honesty of the men. They began to leave their money at the store for safe keeping. This practice became so general that the two partners decided to open a bank of deposit and exchange in 1847. At first they continued their grain and store business. By 1850 banking had become their major business, so in that year they put a sign over the door which read, "Bank." A room was equipped with a banking counter for receiving money. At this time Middletown had a population of 1,087. The bank operated under the partnership of Oglesby and Barnitz, and became the center of the town's financial life. It furnished credit for the development of local industry and all kinds of business. Soon this took so much of the men's time that they had to close out their general store and exporting business.

The partners later bought the building and Oglesby lived in the residence part of it, south of the banking room until his death. This private bank was so well managed that it survived the Panic of 1857 and of 1873, which brought about the closing of so many Ohio banks. Many merchants owed their beginning and success to The Oglesby and Barnitz Bank. Most of the early paper mills were financed by the funds of this bank.

Upon the death in 1883 of Oglesby, the private bank became a cor-



poration. Charles B. Oglesby, oldest son of William, and George C. Barnitz became the largest stockholders. They directed the affairs of the bank for many years. George C. Barnitz was to give many more years to the financial and industrial development of Middletown. His wise investment in land helped make possible the planned development of the Middletown community. Much of his land is now used for fine parks and school sites.

At mid-century, Middletown had found a new leadership team to guide its destinies—Oglesby-Barnitz.

Meanwhile another bank was founded. In the law office of Doty and Gunckel some Middletown farmers and merchants met in July 1865, and decided to organize The First National Bank under the provisions of the National Bank Act passed by Congress in 1864. The bank was chartered and authorized by the Treasurer of the United States. Among the stockholders who provided the bank with \$100,000 capital were the most substantial men of the town. The first president was J. Sutphin and the first cashier, L. D. Doty.

Charles Gunckel, E. P. and J. M. Loehr associated in a partnership as the firm of Gunckel and Loehr Company to do a general brokerage business. In 1872 the company decided to merge with the New Merchant's National Bank.

As other local mergers were completed, the First National Bank emerged as the largest banking organization in the city with several branches. Oglesby-Barnitz also built a new general office and banking center and several convenient branches. Both organizations make possible a strong financial backing for local business and industry.

### **Savings and Loan Associations**

In 1867 the State of Ohio authorized the forming of mutual thrift or savings associations to enable members to finance the purchase of homes.

Middletown citizens quickly realized the advantages of such an organization and in 1868 the Building and Savings Association was chartered. This was the forerunner of the present Middletown Federal Savings and Loan Association.

The constitution of this first savings group stated that; "The object of this Association is to afford its members an opportunity for safe investment of their weekly savings, to facilitate their acquiring homesteads, and to secure to them the advantages usually expected from savings banks and similar institutions." Since the organizers were all Germans the early minutes are written in that language.

In 1886 Middletown achieved city status and as it continued its steady growth a second savings group was formed in 1889, called the Germania Building and Loan Association, the predecessor of the American Savings and Loan Association.

In the early days these two Associations were open only one evening each week to receive the dues and deposits of members. Later as business increased they were obliged to establish regular daily office hours.





In 1907 a third savings group was chartered as the Citizens Building Loan and Savings Association.

These three Associations have financed the purchase of thousands of homes with the result that a very high percentage of Middletonians are home owners. This has added a great deal of stability to our community. With combined assets in excess of \$42,000,000 these strong institutions continue to serve our constantly growing city.



The beautiful First Baptist Church built in 1906.





# Wartime and Heroes



During the early years, war came to Middletown just as it did to every other village and town in the nation. The town has always had a fine war record, and produced her share of heroes. Since there was no settlement here during the Revolution, there could be no participation in the War for Independence. After the Revolution many of these veterans came West to settle on Miami lands. Such men as James Grimes and Joseph Compton and other Revolutionary soldiers helped build the town.

## War of 1812

Enlistment for the War of 1812 was conducted by Lieutenant Philip Price of the army, stationed in Middletown. In those days before the draft, men had to be convinced to fight by being given bounties and land. After the Declaration of War, Middletown raised her share of men, for the people of the West had wanted the war. They wanted to drive the English out of the Northwest and off Lake Erie. Joel Collins of Oxford commanded the local group.

One of the leading citizens to join the volunteers was James Heaton, a surveyor and Justice of the Peace. He became a brigade quarter master officer under General William Henry Harrison, who had been the hero of Tippecanoe. With Harrison at Fort Meigs, and the Battle of the Thames, Heaton saw the British power broken in the Northwest.

The boys of Middletown, too young for battle, went out into the forests of the valley and shot wild hogs which they sold to the soldiers for meat. When the soldiers passed through Middletown on the way to Dayton, the women prepared a fine meal for them. Many of these men died at the hands of the Indians, allied with the British.

## The Mexican War

It remained for the Mexican War, which began in 1846 to produce two heroes for Middletown.

"Under the walls of Monterey

# Journal of the



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At daybreak the bugles began to play  
Victor Galbraith!

So begins the famous poem by America's most popular poet of that day, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—a poem which tells the story of a Middletown boy in the Mexican War.

For the beginning of this story one must go back through the years to 1846. These were stirring times—the United States and Mexico were at war. It was a difficult choice for Victor Galbraith to make—should he stay home to care for his aged, widowed mother, or should he follow the example of his father and grandfather who had fought gallantly in the wars of 1776 and 1812. At the "Old Brick" he had learned of his duty to his God and his country, and he decided that his duty came first. Bidding farewell to his gray-haired mother and the town of his birth, he volunteered and was assigned to General Taylor's command. And under the banners of "Old Rough and Ready" his outfit marched away to take part in the conquest of Mexico.

Victor Galbraith was not only a good soldier, but an excellent bugler, and his clear, loud bugle call became known to the boys as "Victor's Blast." It was this love of music which was to lead to trouble. Among the frequent visitors to the army camp at Monterey was a gifted Portuguese woman, who not only played the harp well, but sang in a lovely voice. Victor, along with hundreds of other boys, would gather around in the twilight to hear her sing songs of home.

One of the officers seeing the interest in this woman and thinking that she might possibly be the cause of a leak of vital information to the enemy ordered the men to go back to their tents. Victor was angry, at what he considered an unjust request, and made a casual remark which was overheard by the superior officer. For that remark the officer had Galbraith arrested.

Since the young bugler had defended the lady in a round-about way, by protesting her removal, things began to happen fast. Putting together circumstantial evidence, the officer immediately jumped to the wrong conclusion. He thought that he had at last unraveled a spy network and accused Galbraith of being a partner in treason with the Portuguese woman. Thus without ever proving that either the woman or the bugler was a spy, army authority went its way and much to Galbraith's surprise, he was tried, not for insubordination of which he admitted he was guilty, but for the high crime of treason. He was found guilty and sentenced to be shot!

When he was brought before the firing squad, he was asked if he had a last word to say, he replied: "My only desire is that posterity will efface the brand of suspected traitor from my name. Knowing no home but my native land, bearing allegiance to none but my country's flag, I shudder at the false charge of treachery to my country's cause. Take good aim my comrades. I am ready to die the death of a soldier, a mistaken sacrifice to army discipline. I bid you farewell."





He cast his eyes over his comrades who sorrowfully executed their mission. The order given, twelve shots rang clear from the stillness of that morning dawn. Victor fell to the ground, but was not yet dead. He asked for water, which was given him, but the blood from his wounds discolored the water. He begged for mercy and another volley of shots. Three more bullets and Galbraith lay dead.

Some of his friends had appealed to the President of the United States, and he sent a pardon, which arrived too late. However, an investigation was held and it proved conclusively that Galbraith had been innocent of the crime charged, and guilty of only a simple remark. The sad story so touched the heart of the great poet, Longfellow, that he wrote his name to live forever in verse and in the story of America.

When the terrors of the siege subsided, the soldiers departed from the plains of Monterey, following forces of the enemy in retreat. The land was again desolate. Near the deserted camping ground was a rough board on which was inscribed: "Victor Galbraith—Beware stranger. Fate's innocent victim lies buried here." Within the sound of the bells of Monterey lies a soldier. Time, of course, has erased the board and now flowers bloom over a grave and the Mexican drives his burro over the resting place of a brave Middletown boy. There is a legend told by some of the natives of Monterey that when the air is clear and calm, one can still hear a bugle play.

Today in the yard of Elks Temple a stone recalls this pathetic story; it is inscribed simply "Victor Galbraith" and in the summer is hidden by the grass and in the winter by the leaves.

Under the walls of Monterey  
By night a bugle is heard to play,  
Victor Galbraith.

When volunteers were asked for in the Mexican War, the men of Middletown and Butler County met at Hamilton in May 1846 to organize a company. Ferdinand Vanderveer was a member of this company and was appointed orderly sergeant. Vanderveer was the son of Dr. Peter Vanderveer. He was born in Middletown in 1825, attended local schools and then graduated from a Cincinnati college. He went to Tennessee to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1845. At 21 he was in the army.

When the Butler County company was organized it joined the First Ohio Regiment. This regiment was ordered to New Orleans by President Polk—the trip was made by steamboats down the Ohio. Here the regiment joined General Zachary Taylor, who was headed toward Monterey. The march was long and hard, and since water was scarce the army had to march with very little—one whole day passing without any water. The troops rested at Camargo, which is on the San Juan River.

The quartermaster, Lieutenant Witherby, had arrived earlier and put up his tent. Under his hammock he had a barrel of whiskey. Sergeant Vanderveer discovered it, and thinking the men needed it more than the





officer, thought of a way to get it. With a friend he laid his plans. He sent his helper out with camp buckets and kettles, and the two men crawled under the tent and filled the receptacles. The next morning Vanderveer invited the men to his tent, and gave each man a tin of whiskey. When the quartermaster awakened, he decided to pour his appetizer. He tapped the barrel, and found it dry. The joke leaked out, but nothing was done about it for the whole company was in on the prank. When the Lieutenant later resigned, Vanderveer was elected to take his place.

When an attack was made on the garrison at Monterey, the captain was wounded and sent home. Vanderveer took his place. On March 2, 1847 Vanderveer wrote a letter home to inform his father of some of the events of the war. The Mexicans surrounded the Second Ohio Regiment at Marin, and Vanderveer volunteered to go to its relief. They saved the garrison.

When the troops were on the way to Monterey, Vanderveer rode horseback. He rode so rapidly that he was soon ahead of his troops. Coming toward him to take him prisoner were 150 Mexican lancers, but his troops arrived just in time to save their captain. At Monterey they provided the necessary reinforcements to win the battle with the Mexicans. Vanderveer's men had marched 80 miles, fought the enemy on two meals and four hours of sleep, the road serving as their beds. At Monterey they were quartered in a large house which they called the "Butler Barracks."

At the end of the year for which they had enlisted, the Butler men returned to New Orleans to be mustered out. The men returned to Hamilton June 20, 1847. When the Middletown members of the company arrived home, they were honored at the Fourth of July celebration. A procession was formed and a parade held. After the address of the day, the citizens of Middletown, through their spokesman, David Heaton, presented Vanderveer a fine sword and two other Middletown boys who had distinguished themselves were given rifles. A dinner was held for the group at Union House.

Being a military hero, it was easy for Vanderveer to be elected sheriff in the fall of 1847. Then he became editor of the *Hamilton Telegraph*, leading newspaper of the county. There he became involved in some interesting controversies.

Although the Mexican War soon ended, things did not settle down in the political field. The Whigs and the Democrats were bitter enemies. Then on the scene came the new, but weak Republican Party. But underlying all the turmoil was a more serious issue—one that eventually would have to be settled, despite compromise after compromise.

This was the question of slavery. In Middletown Lovejoy's paper had a few readers, and Garrison had many admirers. The great Wendell Phillips, an orator of the old school, aroused the people of this whole valley when his voice thundered at Cincinnati in a great lecture against



slavery. Henry Ward Beecher delivered his startling sermon during which he sold a Negro into slavery.

In 1856 and again in 1858 the great lawyer of Cincinnati Salmon P. Chase, later Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, was elected governor of Ohio. He had declared that he would never enforce in Ohio the "Dred Scott" decision of the U. S. Supreme Court.

In 1852 came the bombshell from the pen of the little woman from Cincinnati, Harriet Beecher Stowe. It was the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* read by everyone in Middletown. Here she was revered.

In the Hamilton and Cincinnati newspapers, local citizens were following the Lincoln and Douglas Debates. Lincoln at that time was known little outside of Illinois. Douglas was the national hero, and it was he who attracted the interest of the local farmers, especially those west of the river.

In fact in 1859 Lincoln was not thought of as a candidate for president, as shown by this episode in Middletown history.

### **Lincoln Sees Middletown**

It was Saturday, September 17, 1859. It had been an ordinary day for the people of Middletown, but it had been a very unusual one for Abraham Lincoln. While he had visited Cincinnati during a famous law case in 1855, this was the first time he had traveled down the Miami Valley.

He had heard of the valley all his life, for it was noted as a rich farming region. Cincinnati was the "Queen City of the West." In 1859 its population was 160,000.

Lincoln was a passenger on the old Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad. As it pulled out of the Dayton station, Lincoln sat down on the hard seat in the wooden coach. This tall, lean, lank man was now 50 years of age. He had come to Ohio to help in the state campaign. He had finished speeches, short ones, at Columbus and Dayton.

At Dayton he appeared with a local candidate for Congress, Robert C. Schenck. Lincoln had met Schenck in the House of Representatives, where they both served. The two men were good friends. Robert Steele, writing in the book *Early Dayton*, stated: "Robert C. Schenck was said by Lincoln to have been the first man who in a public address named him for the presidency."

Lincoln had been sent on this campaign trip to offset the popularity of Stephen A. Douglas, the "Little Giant." The Lincoln-Douglas debates had gained nation-wide fame. Many people wanted to hear the man who opposed Douglas.

Lincoln was deep in thought. He had been well received by the people of the Miami Valley. Perhaps he might get somewhere in politics. A friend had written him for a biography to use for campaign purposes.

"Well, I better get started on it," Lincoln said to himself. But first he had better scribble down a few notes for his next speech at Hamilton. He took out an old envelope and began to write.



the first of these was the discovery of gold in California in 1848. This discovery led to a great influx of people into California and the establishment of the state of California in 1850.

The second of these was the discovery of gold in Nevada in 1859. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Nevada and the establishment of the state of Nevada in 1864.

The third of these was the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Colorado and the establishment of the state of Colorado in 1876.

The fourth of these was the discovery of gold in Idaho in 1860. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Idaho and the establishment of the state of Idaho in 1890.

The fifth of these was the discovery of gold in Montana in 1862. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Montana and the establishment of the state of Montana in 1889.

The sixth of these was the discovery of gold in Wyoming in 1869. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Wyoming and the establishment of the state of Wyoming in 1890.

The seventh of these was the discovery of gold in Utah in 1863. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Utah and the establishment of the state of Utah in 1896.

The eighth of these was the discovery of gold in Arizona in 1863. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Arizona and the establishment of the state of Arizona in 1909.

The ninth of these was the discovery of gold in New Mexico in 1861. This discovery led to a great influx of people into New Mexico and the establishment of the state of New Mexico in 1906.

The tenth of these was the discovery of gold in Texas in 1845. This discovery led to a great influx of people into Texas and the establishment of the state of Texas in 1845.

The eleventh of these was the discovery of gold in California in 1848. This discovery led to a great influx of people into California and the establishment of the state of California in 1850.

The whistle startled Lincoln from his writing. The wood-burning engine of the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad came to a halt at the West Middletown station.

Abraham Lincoln looked out. To the west were the hills overlooking the Miami River. He watched the September sun over the forest clad hills. Then he turned to scan the eastern horizon. There across the river was the low-lying skyline of a town, punctured by a few three story brick buildings. He saw a sign on the wooden bridge which read, "Middletown, Ohio, Population 2,070."

The engineer paused a few minutes to give the fireman a chance to pick up some wood from the pile by the station. The firewood was chopped in the West Middletown hills and brought down to be sold by the cord. This brief stop gave the passengers an opportunity to get out to stretch. As Lincoln stepped out of the car, the engineer observed:

"That fellow has plenty to stretch—longest legs ever did see. Looks like he's another one of those politicians on the way to Hamilton to make a speech."

Lincoln got out, but he had quite a time to keep out of the way of a drove of swine, which he referred to as plain hogs, that were on the way to market. He looked at the two covered bridges which spanned the two channels of the Miami. He watched the toll keeper take pennies from the travelers on the way to the town. He heard the farmers complain about the noisy and smoky engine.

Few of the men on the way to Middletown that Saturday took notice of a lanky, ill-dressed passenger out exercising. None ever guessed that as the C. H. and D. pulled out of the West Middletown station that with that one odd passenger was riding the destiny of a nation.

But how could one expect them to—for this was only 1859 and few had thought of Abraham Lincoln as anymore than a small town politician.

On that small wooden railroad car on the way to Hamilton rode Abraham Lincoln. He had been defeated by Douglas in the campaign for the Senate the previous fall. But he was looking forward to the campaign of 1860—thought he might take part in it.

Traveling with Lincoln was John A. Gurley of Cincinnati, a very short man. As Gurley and Lincoln emerged from the car at Hamilton people laughed at the contrast. Never one to pass up an opportunity to make a joke, Lincoln pointed to himself and then to small Gurley remarking: "My friends, this is the long of it, and this is the short of it."

A few Middletonians were interested enough in Lincoln to go to Hamilton to hear him speak. He spoke for 20 minutes at Hamilton at the depot there. In part this is what he said:

"This beautiful and far-famed Miami Valley is the garden spot of the world. My friends, your sons may desire to locate in the West. You don't want them to settle in a territory like Kansas, with the curse of slavery hanging over it."

Although Lincoln today is a legend in Butler County, as he is all





over the world, the home-spun Kentuckian was not too well received by the people of the county. The *Hamilton Intelligencer*, which was widely read in Middletown reported the following day:

"People were generally disappointed in the man and his appearance. The outlines of his head can lay no claim to intellectuality. He cannot be a great man, everyone feels it. He displays no oratory, but judging from the peculiar twinkling of his eye, he is no slouch at wit.

"Ugliness predominates: rough and rugged in manner and looks, he still is conceded to possess fine talent as a debater. The idea of a comparison with Douglas is ridiculous, and no one but a fool ever thought of it."

Lincoln made two other trips to the Ohio country. On Feb. 13, 1861 he made his third visit. Some 50,000 people greeted the president-elect at Cincinnati. In looking forward to his administration he promised. "I will simply say that I am for those means which will give the greatest good to the greatest number."

On this visit to Cincinnati, Middletonians took notice. Many of them went by train and canal boat to see the great welcoming parade at Cincinnati, for Middletown had cast the majority of its votes for the man from Illinois.

#### **Middletown's Record in the Civil War**

After hearing Lincoln's Inaugural Address, Middletonians hoped that somehow the inevitable conflict could be resolved by the wise lawyer. Then were heard the guns of Fort Sumter. While they had argued among themselves how the problem of slavery should be solved, this shot united the town in one resolve—The union must be preserved. When Lincoln issued his call for troops to serve 90 days, Middletown replied with hundreds of volunteers, although her population was only 2,070. Within a few days Robert Wilson and Joseph Hilt had formed companies which became part of the First and second Regiments of Ohio.

When the Civil War broke out, Vanderveer was appointed Colonel of the 35th Ohio Regiment, which was the first entire regiment to come out of Butler County. It was organized in August 1861. The regiment composed of 900 young men, left Hamilton on September 26, for Covington, Kentucky, and established headquarters at Cynthiana.

Colonel Vanderveer's experience in the Mexican War caused him to take every step possible in the rapid drilling and disciplining of his men. He did his best to train his men well. In the field he saw that picket lines were properly established and that his soldiers had the best possible conditions. The men had great confidence in his ability.

While in Tennessee, one of the Generals died and Vanderveer took command of a brigade. After he assumed command, he organized it so it moved in two lines, one relieving the other when its ammunition was used up. With this method he did not give an inch of ground to the enemy.

In a letter to his home in Middletown, Lucius Potter described the



battle of Chickamauga. Vanderveer's brigade had marched all night. After breakfast they fought for 6 hours, and then slept on the battlefield without blankets or fires even though the ground was covered with frost. The next day the men fought from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The musketry fire was terrific. The regiment took 594 men into battle, losing 194, killed, wounded or missing. Potter reported that never was there a braver or cooler man in the field than Vanderveer.

After the Atlanta campaign, Colonel Vanderveer had to be relieved of his command due to illness. He was then appointed a General and assigned to the Fourth Army Corps, and stayed with it in Tennessee until the end of the war.

In 1865 Vanderveer returned to private life. He became an important lawyer, and served as Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for many years. He earned his place as Middletown's first soldier, and first important lawyer.

Another Middletonian who won a place in the history of the Civil War was Daniel Bowman. He had served in the Mexican War, and returned with the title of Captain. In August 1862 he formed the 93rd Volunteer Regiment, largely of Middletown men.

His regiment took part in the battles of Chickamauga, Stone Mountain, Lookout Mountain, and Missionary Ridge. Captain Daniel Bonnell returned to Middletown with an arm lost at the Battle of Atlanta, as did five other local men. Despite these handicaps they became useful citizens of the community.

Daniel Bowman became an engineer and contractor, building mills, dams and bridges in the area. Later he was honored by being made mayor of the town.

Another group of Middletown soldiers were in the 69th Regiment, commanded by Colonel L. D. Campbell. This regiment was under the army commanded by General Meade. They fought with Meade at Gettysburg, the turning point of the Civil War. In all some 500 men from this area fought in this terrible war. Many never returned; many stayed long months in Libby prison; and many returned wounded.

At one time the people of Middletown became very alarmed over the progress of the War. During the summer of 1865, General John H. Morgan with almost 2500 cavalrymen crossed the Ohio near Cincinnati. Neighboring Hamilton and Warren counties were invaded, and the people of Middletown feared that they might be in for a dashing, surprise raid. Cincinnati and Southern Ohio appealed to the Governor of the State for help. He called out the Home Guards and sent them to Cincinnati.

When the rebel leader, Kirby Smith, threatened to take Cincinnati, the council met, declared martial law and put the whole population on a war basis. Soon 15,000 men were ready to defend Cincinnati. Since many of these men had come in from the country with their trusty guns, they were called the "Squirrel Hunters."





During Morgan's raid the rebels moved so fast, that their horses became tired. They would replace these horses with new ones wherever they found them. Many local farmers on hearing Morgan was headed this way, took their horses to the hills for hiding and safekeeping. The people who owned horses within the village took them out to secluded farms hoping to keep Morgan from seizing them.

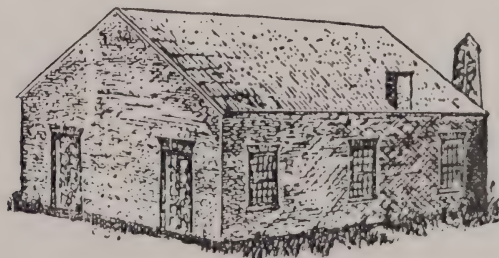
Morgan never got near Middletown, and he was captured and sent to the Penitentiary. He later escaped in a dare-devil plan. This was the high tide of the Confederacy. After the defeat at Gettysburg, the North was in no danger of further invasion.

During the war, the women met at Washington Hall or Vanderveer's Grove to make bags for the soldiers in which they could keep their personal items. They called these bags, "House-wives."

The Civil War had just ended, but Middletown's rejoicing was soon turned to sorrow. The news of April 14, 1865 brought sorrow to local residents. When the newspapers arrived on the 15th from Cincinnati, they were sold out within a matter of minutes. There was no doubt about it, Lincoln was dead. Church bells began to toll the sad news. All flags were put at half-mast. Stores and houses were draped with black cloth. Horace P. Clough called a special meeting of the citizens of the community. It was agreed that the following Sunday all churches would hold memorial services. It was on that day Rev. J. B. Morton in the overflowing Presbyterian Church delivered his greatest sermon: "Know Ye Not There Is A Prince and a Great Man Fallen This Day in Israel."

Women in the congregation who had lost men in the war, dressed in black. The following Wednesday, business was suspended from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Only the tolling bells broke the silent mourning of a saddened Middletown. The end of an era had come.

During the Spanish-American War, the two World Wars and the Korean engagement, thousands of our men, and many of our women served their country. Many gold stars commemorate those who lost their lives. At little Arlington, the people of Middletown honor their memory.

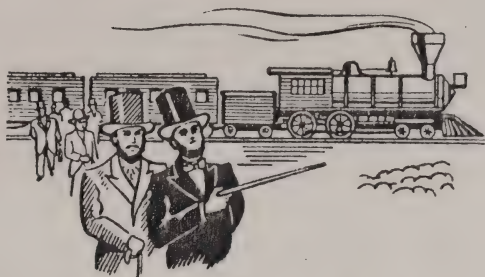


First brick church in Middletown, built by the Methodist in 1829. Later used as a school.





# Railroads And Hydraulic Help A Town



## The C. H. and D. Railroad

The shrill whistle of the steam-puffing locomotive coming around the West Middletown bend brought a new life to Middletown. New and faster transportation was on the way. While the gurgling water of the hydraulic canal made a less spectacular entrance into the city, this event was of great importance to the industrial development of the community.

As early as 1831 charters had been granted to companies to build railroads in the Miami Valley, but it was not until 1851 that the first railroad reached Middletown. The canal, until that time, had served the people of this area with adequate transportation facilities. A charter was issued to The Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad on March 2, 1846, and the railroad was completed five years later.

In 1850 the first annual report of the road was published. At that time it was expected that the road would be completed by the next year. In January, 1850, the contract had been made for the best quality of rails, sixty-five pounds to the yard, which were to be delivered at New Orleans by December, 1850. The cost of the iron laid down at Cincinnati was to be less than \$50 per ton of 2,240 pounds. The Mad River and the Lake Erie Company was completing their road, which was to meet the C. H. and D. at Dayton and increase the usefulness of both lines. The Columbus and Xenia railroad also made plans to extend its road to Dayton. Mr. Cist, writing in the *Cincinnati Advertiser*, declared: "I put my prediction on record, that there will be no more important or better dividend paying road in the United States than this must prove."

The C. H. and D. had a natural approach to Cincinnati. It was the outlet for a large part of the fertile Miami Valley, which was one of the most prosperous and fertile sections of the state. It had access to a terminus on the Ohio River at Cincinnati.

In June, 1850, Mr. L'Hommedieu, president of the C. H. and D. and the two principal engineers, Woods and Shoemaker, arrived in Dayton. They reported that \$100,000 was needed to complete the railroad. If the money could not be obtained, the railroad would have to be delayed. The money however was raised, and on August 29, 1850, when two boat



loads of iron arrived at Dayton, construction began at that point.

The stock of the C. H. and D. was readily sold for this railroad appeared to be of permanent value. It was located along a thoroughfare of trade and travel from the North and Northwest into Cincinnati. The route furnished three hundred passengers daily to the stages and canal packets. Since the road was to connect with other railroads leading from central and northern Ohio, a million dollars worth of stock was bought by wealthy men who were cautious investors. The total cost of the road was \$1,500,000; the board issuing \$500,000 in bonds, payable in ten years at seven per cent.

Middletown felt prosperity: the age was alive with progress. Railroads were being built throughout the country, furnishing a new method of transportation. The editor commented: "In the last century mighty changes have taken place. News flies by lightning, and traveling is done by steam. Telegraphs are being constructed from one village to another. Railroads are becoming as thick over the Union as water courses, and still the untiring energy and enterprise of the American People knows no end." The village of Middletown was watching the construction of her first railroad, and was hoping for the building of another line, which was to run east of the city.

In May, 1851, a survey had begun for a new railroad that was to run from Dayton to Cincinnati; it was to be twelve miles shorter than the road by Hamilton, and was to be called the "Shortline Railroad."

Meanwhile the C. H. and D. was progressing, and the work was to be finished by September 1, 1851. The people of Middletown could hear the shrill whistle of the locomotive a few miles below the town as early as August. The townspeople were not satisfied with this railroad, for it ran through West Middletown, and was located west of the river. They charged that it missed every town between Hamilton and Dayton, and made as many turns as a serpent. The people felt that the interests of Carrolton, Miamisburg, Franklin, and Middletown, which had a total population of 5,000, had been disregarded. The company was accused of locating the road for the personal aggrandizement of a few, so that it could fill its own coffers. Many feared that the location of the railroad on the west side of the town would ruin it.

On September 18 the train, or Iron Horse, arrived. The whole town, despite former grumbling, turned out to greet the locomotive and the crew. Even the bitterest enemies of the project were happy to see the completion of the road. Everyone who could get on the train climbed aboard and rode to Dayton. Many of the citizens who had been most opposed to the railroad were so pleased with the ride that they decided to go to Hamilton and were tempted to go on to Cincinnati. Since it was growing late, they decided that they had better return to Middletown: they left the cars at Hamilton to return to Middletown by way of packet, which trip cost 50 cents. Some left the cars midway between Middletown and Hamilton. These people returned home walking, running, wading in the





river, and riding on rickety wagons. They were willing to put up with inconveniences rather than lose a ride of a few more miles on the new train. It was a great day of celebration.

When the railroad was completed, the merchants of the towns along the line looked forward to an increase in trade. Home manufactures profited most. The C. H. and D. Railroad was prosperous. The net earnings of the road for the first six months of its operation amounted to 3 per cent of the total cost.

The company feared that a competitive railroad would be established to run east of the river. In its second annual report it stated that it had made a survey of all possible routes before building the road, and that to have adopted the shortest route between Cincinnati and Dayton would have been longest in running time. It stated that running parallel to the canal and turnpike would have meant unnecessary competition. The company believed that the country west of the Miami River furnished three-fourths of all the travel and produce from the northwest into Cincinnati. The adoption of the shorter route would have left Hamilton far west, and this town was furnishing more business than all the other villages combined. The company warned that the building of a railroad in the area between the Little and Great Miamis could not be a paying proposition, for it would be located between and parallel to two other railroads, fifteen miles apart and already in successful operation.

Nevertheless, the building of the Shortline road was not abandoned. A meeting was held at Middletown at Odd Fellows' Hall for the purpose of selling stock for the contemplated railroad between Dayton and Cincinnati. A committee of six was appointed to sell stock and promote the building of the road. At Miamisburg a meeting was held at which \$34,250 was raised.

In October, 1852, the Shortline railroad's contract for building and equipping the entire road was closed. The contractors were to meet every expense except the building of depots and the securing of rights of way. A member of the firm to whom the contract was awarded withdrew his bid, and the contract was relet. The road was to be completed in 1854.

Middletown wanted to be on the route of the new railroad, but some of the farmers hesitated to grant the right of way to the company. These farmers were urged to make fair and liberal terms to the promoters of the railroad, for this road would bring them closer to the Cincinnati market. Middletown, the largest town on the eastern side of the river, promised to furnish more passenger and freight business than any other town between Dayton and Cincinnati. When the Shortline railroad was located, Middletown was to be on the route. Claims of other routes were examined, but it was found that Middletown offered the best possibilities. So many obstacles to the building of this railroad developed that it was not completed until 1871.

The C. H. and D. continued to be successful. This railroad, which was sixty miles long, had cost \$3,183,000. It had a total debt of \$1,526,000,





stock issued was \$2,155,000. For the year 1857 the road earned \$556,000, and the net profits for the year were \$194,000.

The freight consisted of flour, grain, whiskey, hogs, lumber, and other things. The railroad did away with much of the pork packing industry here, as hogs could be shipped to Cincinnati and packed there. Grain was shipped as it could be sent to market more cheaply by railroad, and could be sold without processing into flour or whiskey. It became cheaper to ship the farm produce to a large center for processing, where through mass production techniques a savings would be effected.

The railroad also gave Middletown an opportunity to manufacture products which could be shipped to other cities and villages throughout the United States. It afforded Middletown an opportunity to specialize in the production of goods which it could produce more cheaply or better than other areas. The paper industry and the tobacco industry were to develop because of this advantage. Although the railroads forced the town to make radical readjustments in its economic system, it made possible the rapid development of a prosperous, industrial Middletown.

The most immediate effect of the railroad was felt by the people who worked on the canal. The railroad, because it provided rapid and cheap transportation, soon took the business of the canal. After 1851 the canal statistics are of little value, for most of the imports and exports of the town were transported by the "Iron Horse." The railroad meant the end of canal days.

### **The Shortline Railroad**

In 1871 Middletown was to obtain another railroad. The Cincinnati and Springfield Railroad Company had a difficult time finding an entrance to Cincinnati, but finally an agreement was made to enter from the north using the tracks and the terminal of the Baltimore and Ohio. Through climbing hills out of the Cincinnati area, it could chart a shorter route than the C. H. and D., and thus for many years was referred to in the Miami Valley as the "Short Line."

The location of the line through Middletown, however, was the result of a compromise. The company promised to bring the railroad one mile to the west of the proposed route, but that still left the railroad one mile from the center of the town at that time.

Then most of the town was west of the canal. There was little the committee could do but accept the compromise, and let the town go to meet the railroad, which it did.

Its location on the eastern outskirts led Sorg to locate his tobacco plant across the road from its station. When this railroad consolidated, it became known as the Big Four as it connected the Big Four cities of Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago and St. Louis. Eventually it became part of the New York Central lines.

### **The Pennsylvania Railroad**

By 1890 Middletown was connected with the great east-west railroad trunk line through the Big Four. The Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton



(which became the Baltimore and Ohio) connected the Ohio River with the Great Lakes area, and had purchased the short Middletown to Hamilton rail line. Local industrialists were not satisfied, as they wanted a link to the leading line in America, the Pennsylvania Railway System. It was Paul J. Sorg who started the movement rolling in 1891.

Money was subscribed by local citizens. The local business leaders wanted to build a short line of railroad track eastward to connect with the Cincinnati, Lebanon and Northern Railroad to secure another route into Cincinnati, and then a junction with the Pennsylvania line. Surveys showed that the line could be built and with Sorg at the head of the project the money was soon raised.

A Middletown man, T. C. Simpson, who was a member of the Sorg company, was put in charge of the construction of the line. Simpson pushed the line to completion in a short time. To reach the C. L. and N. a bridge had to be built over the Little Miami. How well Simpson built this bridge is shown by the fact that it stood solid during the 1915 flood. Simpson examined every cut and fill in building the line.

Soon the link was made with the Pennsylvania system, and Middletown had its third railway system. This railroad helped bring new industries to the town. At first it was difficult to keep the line in operation, but it became an important factor in industrial development. Today Armco Steel Corporation uses it as a major line to bring in raw materials and ship out finished products.

### Turnpikes and Tollgates

Several turnpikes entered the town, The Middletown and German-town Turnpike Company and the Middletown and West Alexandria Turnpike Road were in operation. Another road led from Middletown to Winchester, now Gratis. It was on this turnpike that a toll-gate was proposed between the railroad depot and the river bridge, but this proposal brought about a great protest

Middletown was surrounded by toll gates; it was hemmed in in every direction by them. Some people did not come to town to trade because the tolls were high. The editor of the *Emblem* proposed that a free bridge be constructed over the Great Miami River. A petition was sent to the county commission asking for their aid and co-operation. Since the railroad had been located on the western side of the river, a free bridge was badly needed to make fullest use of the railroad.

The petition was not successful, and a private company built the bridge across the river and charged tolls. In August, 1852, a notice was posted to bridge builders stating that sealed proposals would be received for constructing an open-arch bridge across the river. J. G. Ledman was president of the company and George C. Barnitz, secretary.

In 1854 a Hamiltonian visited Middletown. He observed that the town was destined to become a great manufacturing town, for it had railroad, turnpikes, and many industries. The visitor objected to having to pay three cents for walking over the bridge. The charge for a horse and





buggy was twelve cents. He stated that in Hamilton a footman could go over the bridge free. The Hamilton bridge had two foot walks and the Middletown bridge none, the person on foot having to walk along the same paths as the cattle. A horse and buggy could go over the Hamilton bridge and return for five cents. "The annoyance and delay to which persons are put in going from and returning to the cars, while making change, may yet work more injury to you than would be supposed," the visitor added. Slowly the tollgates disappeared.

### The Hydraulic Canal

Middletown grew, and the need for power became apparent. The industrialists of the town looked enviously at the water power controlled by Mr. Enoch at Manchester.

Abner Enoch knew that his water concessions were of great value. He owned the right to the water taken from the river at the dam which was on his land and which he had first erected. When the canal was built, the state erected a feeder dam on his property, and he, in turn, was to have the right to all the excess water not needed by the canal. This water privilege became more and more important and valuable. Vail had seen that the town would some day need it. Enoch did not want to give up the site, and when he sold part of his lands, he made certain reservations, maintaining the water right of way. In 1829 he sold one hundred twenty acres of ground and had written into the deed that there was to be excluded from that tract "the mill race or channel in which the water is conveyed from the Miami River to the mills of the said Abner Enoch" and also "a strip of land two poles in width through which the surplus water is conveyed from the channel or mill race aforesaid into the Great Miami River." When he sold five hundred and forty-two acres to George Wrenn and F. J. Tytus for \$20,000 he reserved "the right of way through said tract of land to convey all his power from his present head race to the town of Middletown for hydraulic purposes, and the right to construct through the same the necessary races and waterways." The reservation was made general and would cover any route through the land.

In 1848 Enoch sold William Young his property, consisting of 26.67 acres in section 24 with all the mills, distilleries, houses and buildings thereon, all the water power from the state dam across the Miami River, and the right of taking the same to the tract of land sold; also the right which said Enoch reserved in his conveyance to Tytus and Wrenn. William Young paid \$15,000 for the property and water rights.

In September, 1851, the mill and distillery at Manchester owned by William Young were entirely destroyed by fire. Two dwelling houses, a cooper shop, about 250 cords of wood, grain, flour, and whiskey were also destroyed. The loss was valued at \$15,000, and there was no insurance. William Young then sold the land to the firm of Cooper, Erwin, and Henderson, who gained the rights Mr. Young formerly had at the dam, and the right to conduct the water through the property of Tytus and Wrenn. These men knew the value of the water rights. Erwin,





Thomas, Cooper, and Sherlock, through deed transfers, and conveyances of land and water privileges, gained the necessary rights of way. By 1852 the Middletown Hydraulic Company had been formed by these men, as a partnership. Arrangements were made with Tytus and Wrenn so that the race could be constructed, and for this purpose some land was bought from Martin Robinson.

Stephen Vail, as early as 1800, had constructed a brush dam across the Miami River. The owners of the Vail's dam and races said that they should have the use of the water from the river on grounds of priority. When the hydraulic was opened, the water was taken from above the dam and lessened the head of water at the brush dam. After litigation, the hydraulic company acquired all water privileges which had been claimed by some of the early mills. "The races and the primitive dam wasted away.

The Hydraulic Company next had to secure the privilege of constructing a canal through the town. On April 3, 1852, an agreement was made and entered into by the mayor and trustees which provided that the company be authorized "to construct a canal or race from the Northern limits of said Corporation through said Water street . . . as far South as the Southern side of Lebanon Street, for the conveyance of water for Hydraulic purposes." The company, however, had to construct and keep in repair bridges and culverts over its canal or race wherever a street was crossed. The citizens of the town were permitted to use the water from the canal for domestic purposes, and the town was to be permitted to pump the water from the canal for use in extinguishing fires.

In January, 1852, the editor of the *Middletown Emblem* wrote: "A new era, and new prospects are about to open in the history of Middletown! A long-looked for and most important event has come at last . . . Middletown is to have a Hydraulic!" The ground work of the project was commenced. Water was to be brought by a feeder from the state dam, a distance of about two and one half miles. It was predicted that the hydraulic would make Middletown "one of the most prosperous and flourishing towns in Western Ohio." Real estate took an upward movement, for the prospect of cotton mills, foundries, and paper mills increased the value of property.

The Fourth of July was a gala occasion in the fifties. July 4, 1852, was celebrated not only as the anniversary of our independence, but also as the first time water was let into the new hydraulic. The people were very much excited about this event, for it gave Middletown a vast source of water power to run new mills and machinery. People from neighboring towns were invited to the celebration. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon water flowed into the hydraulic. Cannons and guns announced to the surrounding country the great event, which was witnessed by hundreds of citizens. Middletown looked forward to a prosperous future with this water power, and expected to become the "Lowell of the West." The hydraulic laborers each wore a green ribbon around his hat, and carried



a banner on which was represented the harp of Erin, and above it were the words, "The Sons of Liberty," and below, "The Hydraulic Boys." They were escorted into town in military style and were received with cheers by the crowd. To commemorate the occasion, C. C. Mitchell gave a Hydraulic Ball in the U. S. Hotel.

The hydraulic was not completed as projected at that time, but the work had been completed from the town to the Miami Canal, which the hydraulic intersected. At the point of intersection with the canal, gates were built so that loaded canal boats could pass to and from the mills on the hydraulic, saving time and expense in transportation of goods. The hydraulic itself was thus used as a canal. The water surface of the hydraulic and the canal were to remain the same; each receiving water from the same source. When the hydraulic owners completed their race to the canal feeder near the state dam, they had a continuous canal of their own.

The water in the hydraulic was twenty-five feet above the low water line of the river. After the Miami Canal was supplied, the minimum discharge was estimated to be equal to 150 run of four and one-half foot mill-stones, or capable of driving 60,000 spindles. Since the hydraulic was not subject to floods or freshets of the river, the cost of upkeep was to be low. The canal varied in width from fifty feet top water line and six feet in depth to a width of one hundred feet and ten feet in depth. The race of the hydraulic at the mills was thirty feet wide and seven feet deep. The embankment served as a road and towing path. Draw bridges were erected and boats were able to receive and unload freight at the doors of all the mills.

The water wheels were of the improved overshot type. The hydraulic had been constructed very economically, and the company was able to sell power at about half what it cost in Dayton.

John W. Erwin, the engineer who built the hydraulic and supervised the erection of all the water wheels, was born in Delaware. He walked across the mountains in 1828 and came to the Miami Valley, where he became an outstanding engineer. He located several turnpikes, and supervised the building of the Hamilton, Franklin, Troy, and Middletown hydraulics, as well as several others in Michigan and Indiana. In 1859 he was employed by the Board of Public Works to superintend the construction of drains to reclaim large tracts of land in Butler County. He planned mills and railroad lines. In 1842 he was appointed resident engineer for the Miami Canal. In Middletown he was known as the builder of the hydraulic, surveyor of the C. H. and D., and the builder of one of the first paper mills.

When the articles of association of the Middletown Hydraulic Company were adopted at Waverly House, Cincinnati, on September 4, 1854, John Erwin was made the general agent of the company. He was given authority to make leases and collections and to represent the company. Mr. Erwin, however, obtained another engineering job, and in 1855





William B. Oglesby, who owned stock in the company, was made agent. He kept this position until his death in 1885. In 1887 the company became a corporation under the laws of Ohio.

Middletown in 1852 had a bright future. She was located with turn-pikes going in four directions; the Miami Canal ran through the town; the C. H. and D. was on the west side, three-fourths of a mile away. The hydraulic inaugurated a new era, more power meant that more industry would locate in the town. A staff writer for the *Cincinnati Gazette* commented in regard to the Middletown Hydraulic: "The creation of an additional amount of water power would tend to concentrate capital, to develop the energy and enterprise of the people, and greatly increase the prosperity of the people, and greatly increase the prosperity of the town and adjacent country." The whole town was to experience a boom. The crack of teamsters' whips, the sound of the carpenters' hand saws, the merry ring of the masons' trowel, and the rumbling of wheel barrows and carts could be heard in every direction. The ground was covered with stone, lumber, and brick. Foundations of new mills and homes were being laid. In one year the population increased about two hundred.

Along this new hydraulic many new factories were built. Beginning at the upper end, north, a broom-corn establishment was owned by a man named Campbell. A small overshot wheel drove the machinery, which took large quantities of broom corn, cleansed it from the seed, and made it ready for use. This was a great improvement over the horse power which had formerly been used.

J. and C. B. Barnett's saw mill was next along the hydraulic.

Near the bridge was located Martin and Sutphin's flour mill. It was a three-story brick building with all the latest improvements. It used four run of power, could produce 400 barrels of flour a day, and was one of the largest mills in the Miami Valley. The old woolen factory, which had been operated by power from the brush dam built by Vail, was to get its power from the water of the hydraulic, as the old races were abandoned. Martin's interest in the mill was bought out by the Sutphin flour mill. The shop had a front of one hundred and ten feet on the hydraulic, and was thirty-seven feet deep. On the lot next to the machine shop, another factory was to be built.

Richardson, Heaton and Company erected the Globe Paper Mill in November, 1853, which was the second paper mill built in Middletown. In June, 1854, Erwin and Brothers laid the foundations for still another paper mill. They had erected Middletown's first paper mill in 1852. All of these mills obtained their power from the hydraulic.

A woolen mill was located on the hydraulic. In 1853 the Middletown Hydraulic Factory was remodeled under the ownership of R. F. Deaves, who added to the mill a spinning jack, 180 spindles, a power loom, and one thirty-strand condenser. Cloths, cassimeres, sattinets, flannels, blankets, stocking yarn, and other products were manufactured. Carding and spinning were done by the pound. Wool was carded into spools.





Felts were manufactured for paper manufacturers. Wool was taken in exchange for work.

The hydraulic made possible the rapid growth of Middletown. In 1850 there were 1,087 people who lived here; in 1860 the population had grown to 2,070, a percentage increase of 90.4 per cent, the largest ever recorded in Middletown's history.

The completion of the hydraulic brought a building boom. There was more exchanging and selling of property than at any previous time. The price of real estate advanced rapidly, for since the town was increasing in population, the demand for houses was great. It is estimated that one hundred new houses were needed in the spring of 1855. "Where shall I get a house?" was a frequent question. Jacob Leibee erected a brick building one hundred feet long and three stories high on the South side of Lebanon street, now the site of the Middletown Federal Savings and Loan Association building on Central Avenue.



First Methodist Church erected in 1891. The first stone church in city.



# The Paper Town



Throughout the Miami Valley, and at Middletown in particular, there has been a localization of the paper industry. This is due to certain geographic features. When the glacier retreated from this area, it left behind a vast cover of fine debris, which has served as a natural filter for water, one of the most important natural resources of the valley. It is this large underground supply of pure, clean water that has made the manufacture of fine papers a possibility in Middletown. Very few places in the United States can be found where the water is so free from iron and other impurities that might discolor paper.

It was early discovered that paper mills could be operated profitably in the Miami Valley. J. W. Kills and Sons, who bought the mills operated for years by James Lowry and Company, were manufacturing paper in Springfield in 1835. They advertised that their price was "regulated by Cincinnati's paper mills," and promised to use the best materials and workmen.

In May, 1850, Beckett and Rigdon of Hamilton advertised: "The Undersigned have established an extensive paper mill at this place and are prepared to manufacture news and book paper of best quality. Machinery new and improved." The first Middletown news sheet was printed on paper made at Springfield, and in the fifties paper was obtained from the Hamilton paper mill. The Hamilton company bought rags for pulp in this region.

After Middletown had built the hydraulic, water power was available for the operation of new mills. Along this hydraulic grew up the paper industry of Middletown, beginning in 1852 when the Erwin Mills were completed, and it expanded to large proportions. Middletown became famous for the manufacture of paper and was known as the "Paper City."

In 1852, John Erwin and Brothers built the Middletown Paper Mill, which fronted one hundred and sixty feet on the hydraulic race and extended back seventy feet. Six engines were first put into operation, each carrying three hundred pounds of stock, or a total of 1800 pounds. A Fourdrinier machine, seventy-two inches wide, was set up. It was then the largest machine in the West, for the manufacture of book and news print exclusively. A cylinder machine, sixty-eight inches wide, was used in making wrapping and roofing paper. This machine produced 2,600 pounds of wrapping paper, or 4,400 pounds of roofing paper a day. The power used to drive the machinery consisted of four water wheels. In





the mill were two boilers, which generated steam for bleaching and drying purposes.

By 1854 John Erwin and Company had put in operation a wrapping paper department, and machinery for the manufacture of printing paper, which produced paper of fine texture. About 3,000 pounds of wrapping paper, and 2,400 pounds of printing paper were manufactured each day. The plant represented an investment of \$50,000. The printing paper machine was a seventy-six inch Fourdrinier. The company was managed by Mr. H. P. Clough, who was highly respected by the citizens of the town.

The editor of the local paper stated that the completion of the Erwin Mills was very gratifying to the people of Middletown, for a great void was filled up "by the existence of a manufactory that will materially enhance the business of the place, and give employment directly or indirectly to a large number of persons." Formerly the local newspaper had been printed on paper bought from cities near Middletown, but as soon as the local mill was completed, the printer bought his paper from it.

During the month of May, 1854, the Erwin paper mills manufactured 65,000 pounds of fine paper and newsprint. This was accomplished in spite of several shutdowns caused by the repairing of machinery. A. E. Harding, a skilled paper maker, was superintendent of the mill.

In 1854 the company was reorganized under the firm name of Oglesby, Tytus, Erwin and Company. With the assistance of W. B. Oglesby, George Barnitz, F. J. Tytus, George Erwin, William Moore, and A. E. Harding, more capital was brought into the organization which enabled the men to build an addition in 1855 for the manufacture of blotting and bookpaper. Although the mill had been successful under the Erwin management, it prospered even more under the new organization.

In 1865 two members of the firm, George Erwin and A. E. Harding, withdrew, and the firm became Oglesby, Moore and Company. George Barnitz and F. J. Tytus continued as members of the firm. In 1875 Oglesby, Moore and Company was incorporated with a capital of \$200,000 with W. B. Oglesby as president, and George C. Barnitz, secretary. Harding and Erwin had withdrawn to construct the Excello mills. Upon the death of Mr. Moore in 1879, Mr. Tytus assumed control, but since the firm had been incorporated, it operated under its old firm name until 1887, when it became the W. B. Oglesby Paper Company. At that time a new mill was built at the south end of the original plant. The firm was under the management of the United States Playing Card Company, and made board for playing cards.

In 1881 the mill manufactured blotting, wrapping, and roofing papers. Approximately one hundred persons were employed, one-fourth of whom were women, and annual sales amounted to \$150,000. The book and blotting paper mill was equipped with three 400-pound, and four 225-pound engines, and one seventy-two inch Fourdrinier. With the use of water power the mill manufactured 5000 pounds of book and blotting





paper a day. The wrapping paper mill had two 450-pound and one 600-pound engines and a sixty-eight inch cylinder machine. Through the use of water and steam power, 4,500 pounds of wrapping paper and roofing paper were made a day.

In 1855, Richardson, Heaton, and Jacoby built the Globe Paper Mill. It was a large brick building, an "ornament to the town." The mill was equipped with a cylinder machine sixty-eight inches in width with three large engines, each carrying three hundred pounds of stock. They manufactured a good quality of newsprint and sold it to large houses in Cincinnati. The company employed twenty men, and started with a capital of \$15,000. To take care of increasing business, Globe Mill, number two, was constructed.

In a few years George C. Barnitz and C. S. Barnitz obtained an interest in the mill. During the Civil War this mill manufactured large quantities of roofing paper, some of which was sold to the Federal government. The paper was taken by wagon for use at Camp Dennison, which was built on the Little Miami River.

This mill was later purchased by A. Hill and Sons, who operated Globe Mill, number one, and a mill they had constructed, called the Valley Mill. Globe Mill, number two, was taken over by the William Oglesby Company in the early eighties. In 1888 the original Globe Mill was bought by the Tytus Paper Company, but this mill burned in 1900.

On the hydraulic, Erwin, Newmand and Company built a planing mill. In 1875 the building was bought by F. J. Tytus and converted into a paper mill. F. J. Tytus, J. B. Tytus, Colin Gardner, and John Shartle managed the Tytus Paper Company, which at one time had the largest mills in the West. In the seventies this company established records for paper production.

Alex Hill, Sr., and sons, Alex and James arrived in Middletown in 1854 and immediately started the erection of a mill for the manufacture of jute papers. The mill was built to compete with Erwin Brothers. Hill and sons operated their mill until the founding of the Hill and Peck Paper company in 1866, which was the first manila paper mill west of the Allegheny Mountains. The mill is considered to be the direct forerunner of Sorg's Number 1 Mill.

Hill and Peck were both Scottish immigrants. They started their company with a thirty-six inch machine which could produce eight hundred pounds of manila in twenty-four hours. In those days this was considered no small output. When Mr. Alexander Hill went to Cincinnati, acting as an agent for the company, he approached a paper dealer whom he asked to handle the output of his mill. He was told that he could take only half his output and suggested that production be curtailed to prevent overloading the market.

In the early eighties the production of manila paper was 50,000 pounds a day as compared with 800 pounds produced in 1866. In one of the mills, the Valley Mill, there were three 600 to 700 pound engines and one



Could engine, as well as one fifty-six and one sixty-two inch cylinder power engine. The company used both water and steam power.

James Cecil, John Martin, and Joseph Sutphin built a paper mill in 1855 and began the manufacture of newsprint. In 1858 Mr. Martin and Mr. Cecil retired; Smith Wrenn became a partner of Joseph Sutphin and the new mill was called Sutphin and Wrenn.

Sutphin and Wrenn specialized in the manufacture of newsprint, book papers and heavy grades of blotting paper. In 1881 the company employed fifty persons. With a daily output of 5,500 pounds of paper, the sales of the company reached \$200,000 a year. Both water and steam power were used in the mill. The company later turned its attention to blotting papers exclusively, and became known as the Wrenn Paper Company.

In 1867 S. H. Bachlor, J. K. Thomas, and C. H. Wardlow purchased from Marmaduke Dodsworth a little saw mill and flour mill, which had the water power rights at lock 11 on the Miami-Erie Canal. The firm became Bachlor, Thomas, and Company. The saw mill was torn down, and in its place a paper mill was built, which began operations in 1868.

The first writing paper mill west of the Allegheny Mountains was established by A. E. Harding. His career is typical of the early business man. He was born in Shottermill, Surrey, England, on March 14, 1829. His paternal ancestors had for many years been interested in the making of fine papers. His father John Harding ran a small vat mill located in the village of Shottermill. John Harding died before his son was born. During the father's lifetime the family had been in comfortable circumstances, but after his death, times were hard. At the age of seven the boy had to look for work. He first obtained a job in the mill which his father had owned. He worked there until he was seventeen, when he left to serve as an apprentice in the paper mill in Surrey at Carshallton. Here he worked until 1850, when he obtained the status of a journeyman paper maker.

He emigrated to the United States, landing in New York in October, 1850. He immediately went to Massachusetts and obtained a job in the paper mills at Draycott. The next spring he came west to the Ohio country. To get money for the trip he sold books. He secured a job as machine tender at the Black Bottom paper mill, located six miles south of Hamilton. He liked the country, and later obtained jobs in the paper mills of Hamilton and Dayton. At Hamilton he worked for Beckett and Rigdon.

In June, 1853, he came to Middletown to become superintendent of the Erwin paper mill, the first mill erected here. In 1856, when the firm was reorganized, he was admitted to partnership.

He remained with the company until 1865, when he sold his interest in that company to become a member of the firm of Harding, Erwin and company. In 1865 Harding, George Erwin, and Abram Upp laid the



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foundation stone of the Excello Writing-Paper Mill, the first mill to successfully manufacture first-class writing paper west of the Allegheny Mountains. The Excello mill had been erected on the site of an old distillery. The first sheet of paper was taken from the mill November 18, 1865. The mill was a success and disproved the statements of Eastern manufacturers, who said that fine writing paper could not be manufactured in the West.

In 1872 Mr. Erwin retired from the firm, and the Harding Paper Company was organized. Since the demand for the product of the mill grew so rapidly, in 1874 the Harding mill at Franklin was put into operation. Three years later this mill was destroyed by fire, but was rebuilt in 1880. Upon the death of Mr. Harding in 1885, his son C. M. Harding, and T. A. Jones carried on the business. In 1886 the mill was rebuilt.

Throughout the years the mill was a great success. The finest writing paper was produced there. Linen bond and ledger paper were among its specialties.

In 1865 the mill produced 2,500 pounds a day. In 1881 it had a daily production of 3,000 pounds. At that time one hundred and thirty people were employed; eighty percent of the employees were women. Sales amounted to \$200,000 yearly; the payroll averaged \$1000 a week.

In the fifties, William Webster came to Middletown. He opened a store and advertised that he was a dealer in stoves, old iron, copper, brass, and all kinds of tinware. When he was not busy selling merchandise, he was busy trying to invent paper machinery. He was successful, and developed a small machine for manufacturing paper bags, which up to that time were made by hand. His machine reduced the cost of bags and made possible a wider use for that product.

Since Middletown was noted for the manufacture of paper, this would be an ideal place for the making of paper bags. Being near the material needed, money could be saved, and bags manufactured more cheaply. In 1873 R. E. Johnston established a paper bag factory here. The bags were made with the Webster machine, and one person could make seven hundred bags a day. Mr. Webster was a partner in this venture, but at the end of six months the firm was dissolved.

Webster bought part of an old tanning yard, and built a factory on the lot, where he began the manufacture of paper bags using his own patents. At one time he used seventy machines which he had built himself, employed seventy men, and manufactured a half million bags a week.

Johnson continued to manufacture bags using power machines, and made 60,000,000 bags a year. Middletown had two paper bag companies, but in 1883 the Johnston plant was destroyed by fire, and he went out of business. In 1880 Webster retired from the industry.

The patent rights for the manufacture of satchel bottom bags were purchased by the Tytus Paper Company, which manufactured fine manila papers that were excellent for the making of paper bags. For a while the Ohio Bag Company prospered, but with the coming of the con-





solidation of industry, the company found it could not meet the keen competition of larger companies, and so the company sold its patents, machinery was shipped away, and the skilled labor left.

E. L. McCallay bought the vacant buildings of the old company in 1899, refitted the factory with new and improved machinery, and began again the manufacture of paper bags in Middletown. The plant soon became efficient and within a few months was manufacturing 1,250,000 paper bags a day. This company was called the Advance Paper Bag Company. By 1903 the company showed rapid growth, in that year using 5,500,000 pounds of paper in making 235,000,000 bags. It used twenty-one bag machines. In 1904 the company spent \$20,000 in wages for fifty persons. The capitalization that year was raised from \$50,000 to \$200,000 and the company was doubled in size, using forty machines to make 475,000,000 bags a year.

Paper from the Middletown mills had been used by the Raymond Bag Company of Cincinnati. In order to cut down the costs of transportation, this mill was moved to Middletown, but after the death of the owner of the mill, the plant was not too successful. During the nineties the mill was purchased by James Lawrence, the superintendent of the Wardlow-Thomas plant. Using old ropes as a base, Wardlow-Thomas manufactured flour sacking paper. The new Raymond Bag Company became a competitor of the Wardlow-Thomas Company. Finally the company built a new plant northeast of Middletown.

As the use of paper bags increased, the demand became greater, so Lawrence organized another bag company. At first he could not find a suitable location in Middletown, so he began a factory at Miamisburg, but in a few years he moved the Lawrence Bag Company back to Middletown.

In the meantime another paper company had moved to Middletown. In 1892 with a capital stock of \$25,000, Sabin Robbins began the manufacture here of specialty papers—English cloth blotting, die cut cards, and cabinet manila. The company increased its production from 1,500,000 pounds of paper in 1900 to 5,500,000 pounds in 1904. The Cincinnati plant is still in existence.

Middletown had become known as the "Paper City." In 1880 a visitor to the town wrote: "The business of Middletown is largely in the manufacturing of all kinds of paper. The paper interest is immense, great enough to make the town one of the principal centers in the country for that kind of business. Seven great mills run in full force, month in and month out, year after year, giving employment to hundreds of men, women and children."

In 1880 the paper industry of Middletown employed 440 hands, and put over 12,000,000 pounds of first class paper on the market.

In 1887 Henry Howe said this about Middletown: "Middletown is known throughout the country for its paper mills, which manufacture all grades from the common straw and manilla for wrapping to the finest

and the other of a different kind. It is not, however, the same as the first, and it is not the same as the second. It is a third kind of thing, and it is a third kind of thing.

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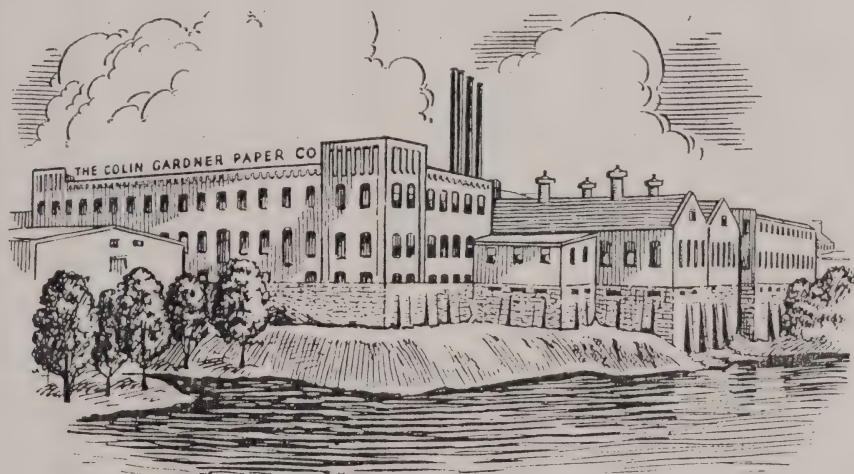
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writing. The medium writing grades are, however, most manufactured. One of the men most prominent in the building up of this great industry is Mr. Francis J. Tytus . . . Middletown enjoys the advantage of good and cheap water power and manufactures, besides paper, agricultural implements, pleasure vehicles, and tobacco to a large extent."

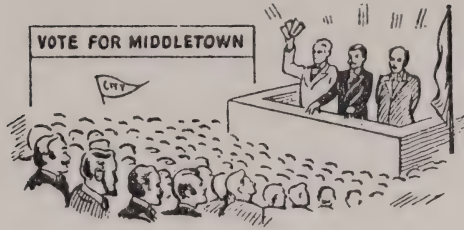




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THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CHICAGO  
PRESS

# A Rising City



After the Civil War, Middletown began to make rapid growth. The Census told the story with these figures: 1870—5,046; 1880—4,538; 1890—7,681. Improvements were being made during this period in our rising city. As soon as Middletown reached the 5,000 mark in population, the people wanted to become a city.

## Middletown Becomes a City

In 1886 an election was held, and 810 voters out of 1,275 approved the proposition that Middletown ask for city status. After the approval of the state and county board, Middletown was granted the standing as city of Grade 4B. This event took place officially on April 6, 1886. In 1887 came the first election under the city status. Since the city had not yet been divided into wards, six councilmen were elected. The first officers to serve the new Ohio city were Colonel Daniel Bowman, respected Civil War veteran, elected as mayor, and John McClellan, a well-known lawyer, solicitor.

The six councilmen met almost every evening to plan the work of the new city. In 1887 they created four wards, and provided that two councilmen be elected from each. The following year they revised the old ordinances.

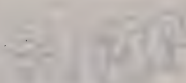
Improvement of the city was the aim of the new councilmen. In order to make free mail delivery easier due to the increasing population, house numbering was begun in 1887. Gravel and brick sidewalks were slowly replaced with cement. More streets were paved with brick and asphalt.

In the early nineties, when business conditions became bad, the council decided to begin a program of public works. This would furnish work for the unemployed and at the same time provide needed public improvements. With this purpose in mind, bonds were issued for \$50,000 which were purchased by local banks. With this money the construction of a new sewer system was begun in 1891. The bricks for the project came from two Middletown brick yards.

One old Middletown landmark gave way to progress. Over the canals there were camel-back bridges. The one at Central and Verity, which had an elevation of 12 feet above the level of the surrounding land, detracted from the appearance of the city. Some of the stores had to have

# A Living City

By [illegible]



At the Old Man, I shall be in a room with a view of the river. The view is a beautiful one, and the room is very comfortable. I shall be in a room with a view of the river. The view is a beautiful one, and the room is very comfortable. I shall be in a room with a view of the river. The view is a beautiful one, and the room is very comfortable.

The first election was held on the 1st of May, 1890. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority.

The second election was held on the 1st of May, 1891. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority.

The third election was held on the 1st of May, 1892. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority.

The fourth election was held on the 1st of May, 1893. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority.

The fifth election was held on the 1st of May, 1894. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority. The result was a victory for the Union. The Union was elected by a large majority.



steps down to their rooms. The newspaper with the citizens behind it began to campaign for a new bridge. Committees went to see the councilmen. Finally this had its effect, and a swinging bridge was installed. It was only 12 feet wide, and at the normal level of the street. When boats went up or down the canal a bridge tender let them through. In due course all the camel back bridges were replaced by swing bridges.

### **City Transportation**

In this same period another landmark came into being. In 1879 the Middletown and Madison Passenger Street Railway Company was given permission to run horse-drawn cars between the two railroads of the city—the C. H. & D. Railroad at Madison, now West Middletown, and the "Short Line" now the New York Central. These depots were some distance from the center of Middletown at Main and Central. Since the streets were mostly gravel, and the sidewalks poor, the people wanted a transportation system. Many citizens traveled by railroad and wanted an easy way to reach the stations.

A corporation was formed, and about two miles of track laid. The company operated two cars drawn by horses or mules. The railroad was completed in 1880, running down the center of Central Avenue. At one time the company asked for an extension of its operation, but this was never carried through. The old Horse-Car became part of Middletown, and long after it had been abolished by other cities, it continued in operation here. When, finally in 1914, it made its last run, New York City had the only other such Horse Car. Ortman-Stewart organized an efficient modern bus transportation system, Nov. 25, 1923.

### **A Paid Fire Department Established**

Middletown had had a fire department, in fact two, but these were on a volunteer basis. It became evident that as the town grew, trained men would be needed. So after being accepted as a city, the council established a paid fire department in 1871. The pay though was small, \$25 a year, and the men had to hold other jobs. Alexander Hill became Chief. Since the men ruined their clothes at almost every fire, the job was accepted more as a civic duty rather than for the money. Some men just enjoyed going to a fire.

By "paying" the men, the city was able to claim that it had a paid fire department, and qualify for lower fire insurance rates. By 1900 the city had two companies of five men each. At the time there were 8 policemen. As the town grew, these two vital safety services developed with the addition of new fire stations and more trained policemen.

### **The Middletown Water Works**

Fire protection was a greater worry in earlier times than it is today. In the day of coal stoves, which easily became overheated, and fire-places which spread sparks, fires were very common. Middletown had two engines, which were drawn by men and operated by hand. Water had to be pumped from private wells, the hydraulic or the canal. It was not under pressure.



Local citizens saw the growing town. There would soon be a time when each home could not have its own well. There was already danger of contamination of water. When Middletonians heard of Dayton's new water plant, they decided to investigate. In 1874 a meeting was held at the home of H. P. Clough, who was in the State Legislature, representing Butler County. It was a long meeting, but a fruitful one. At the meeting was a man from the Holly Pump Company, which had designed the Dayton plant. The Holly representative had examined the large paper mill wells, and the underlying soil and rock.

It had been found that the Miami River was an ancient river, which at one time covered a wide and deep valley. This valley had been filled in with glacial materials. This material provided a natural filtering plant. The company assured the local citizens that by digging great wells they could secure a fine supply of water for drinking purposes, which would need no further filtering.

The committee realized that this water could be pumped from the ground and fed through pipes to every home. They also saw that the hand pumping apparatus of the fire department would no longer be needed. Most of the men were convinced that Middletown should build a Water Works.

While most people approved the project, there were some who objected that it would cost too much money and raise taxes. Some were happy with their own well water, which they thought superior to anything which might come through pipes. The question finally found its way to the ballot, and a majority of citizens voted to proceed with the Water Works.

Along the hydraulic was a small saw mill on Water Street. Since the owners had the water right, the committee felt that this would be a good site to obtain. The water wheel could be used to pump the water from the wells, and no engineer would be needed to run the plant. Water power was cheap and the hydraulic was dependable.

If a big fire broke out, the pumps could be switched to the hydraulic for a bigger supply of water. This seemed to be the ideal spot, so this became the home of the Middletown Water Works, and the old water wheel run by the power of the hydraulic began pumping city water.

The Water Works, which cost \$75,000, was well worth the money. Middletown became the first city of its size to have such an improvement. Three men were elected as its trustees. On April 25, 1875 the system was placed in operation.

In 1886 when a great fire blazed at the Middletown Paper Company, it was seen that one Holly Pump was not enough. As the water was thrown into the fire, the pressure kept decreasing, but the fire kept blazing. The trustees knew that something must be done. Bonds were issued, and two steam pumps were added so that water pressure would be available to meet the needs of any fire.

#### **Gas For Lights**

Candles and coal-oil lamps were used to light the homes of Middle-





town in early days. After the Civil War, local people thought that a great invention had been made when the glass lamp chimney came into general use. Filling the lamp with coal-oil, trimming wicks, and cleaning chimneys was the daily task of the housewife. This was such a great improvement over the candle, that men wondered if any better light could be had.

Around 1870 the answer came—gas could be made out of coal. This gas could be sent in pipes to homes, and used for illumination. Both Cincinnati and Dayton had begun the “gaslight” age. Middletown had such a small population that business men doubted if gas lighting would be possible here. The question was brought before the Quixotic Club, forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce, by V. C. Hatfield. He had seen gas lighting in the “Queen City,” and wished to obtain it for this town. Some of the members had seen gaslight in use in hotels and theaters in other cities and they, too, were impressed.

Organizing in 1871 as the Middletown Gas Light and Coke Company, money was raised to begin the operation. This group asked the City Council for a franchise for Middletown’s first public utility. This was granted and the price set at \$4 per 1,000 cubic feet. The plant was to be located upon a site approved by council, and one mile of mains had to be laid the first year. By 1873 the company was ready to accept customers, but they were slow in signing up. Many feared that the gas would explode, while others did not care for the smoky, yellow flame. Then, of course, it was not cheap.

Two local plumbers went to Cincinnati to learn just how to install gaslighting safely. Many stores saw the value of the new light and had it installed. Council also recognized the need for street lighting, for up to that time the citizens had to carry lanterns with them as they went to a meeting in the town. Lights were installed on the darkest street corners. There were only five lamp posts with gaslight on Central Avenue in the 1870’s. These were to be burned only when the moon was not providing good light.

Gas light had come to Middletown, the only town between Dayton and Cincinnati to have it. The lamp posts became the designated spot for meetings of young people and friends. Politicians met their helpers at the lamp posts. The fire plugs of that time having a flat top, provided a seat for the first person to arrive. It is recalled by one Middle-tonian that the fire plug and lamp post at the Southwest corner of Central and Main was a favorite Republican hangout. At Broad and Central the Democrats conducted their meetings.

“Waiting on the corner, watching all the girls go by” was a favorite evening entertainment for many a young lad. Here young Mr. Middle-tonian was often met by his girl friend. When one male teenager asked a girl to meet him at the lamp post on the corner, she replied, “Don’t take me for a gas meter.”

Soon the churches and stores were using gas and the oil lamp was

There is much to be said for the fact that the oil lamp was  
not a very common article in the household of the poor  
in the early part of the century. It was not until the  
middle of the century that it became a common article of  
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on its way out. Slowly gaslighting came to the average home. Parties became more fun with the bright light of gas adding to the gaiety.

### **The First Electric Lights**

Charles Brush was one of America's leading inventors, who worked with electricity. When his arc lamp was used to light the streets of Cleveland, it was the talk of the town. This was something better than gaslight! Sometime in 1880 this Cleveland scientist visited Middletown, Ohio. He was installing a plant in Cincinnati. On his visit he talked with some of our leading citizens, including Paul J. Sorg.

The Brush Electric Company of Middletown was organized after the inventor's visit, and plans made to erect a tower at the Canal, now Verity, and Central Avenue. This tapered tower made of boiler iron, was three feet in diameter at the base and rose 210 feet above the street. Eight arc type lights were clustered at the top, each with 4,000 candlepower. Little wonder when they were all lighed, that the tower could be seen from Red Lion, Franklin, and Jacksonburg! People at West Middletown stated they read their evening paper in their yards by its light. Lights of 2,000 candlepower each were strung in the downtown section, which were turned on several months before the completion of the tower.

The year of 1881 was the year of the electric arc light. The residents of every major street in town were trying to get a light. The generating machinery was set up in factories around the town, where either water power from the hydraulic or steam power was available. Finally, these would not provide enough power, and the 50 H.P. generating plant at Sorg's plant was used. This new light posed a problem for the gaslight men, which had to be settled at the polls. Middletown chose electricity. The old gas lamplighter had neglected his duty many times, and forgot to light certain corners. This had made the people very angry.

To expand the use of electricity, Thomas A. Edison devised a bulb which would use low voltage, making it practical for home installation. Thus in 1883 a second plant, located in an alley behind South Main Street, was planned. It was called the Middletown Edison Illuminating Company. Council gave this company the right to erect poles and wires along streets and alleys.

It was at this plant that Edison's apparatus for the "friction" control of electrical current was first used. This device was the forerunner of the present rheostat. This was such an important step that the great genius came to Middletown to inspect it himself.

Soon private homes and businesses boasted of having Edison lights. While Brush used the open arc lamp, Edison used an incandescent, enclosed bulb, which was far more practical for home lighting.

The two competing companies bid for lighting Middletown. Since the Edison bid was lower, they were given the contract. When the small Edison bulbs were used, they were very dim compared with the arc lights on the tower. The local editor began his campaign to have



the tower light restored. After two years, he was successful and the arc lights again put the spotlight on growing Middletown.

In 1894 another company, the Middletown Electric Light and Power Company was formed with E. H. McKnight as head. This plant erected a giant tower at Garfield and Girard Avenues to light the East End of the city of that day. This more efficient plant made possible a much wider use of electricity, bringing it into common use. McKnight became an important civic leader.

### **Middletown's First Telephone**

It seemed that whenever the citizens of Middletown heard or read of a new invention, they wanted it. In 1876 the first telephone was operating in the United States, and two years later Middletonians were making plans for such service in this community.

Charles H. Bundy, a young lawyer who came to this city from Lebanon, decided that business was slow for a young graduate of a law school, and made plans to begin two careers at one time. His office consisted of two rooms located on the second floor of a bank building. A new company was organized, the Buckeye Telephone Company. The company received a franchise directly from Alexander Graham Bell of Boston. The town council gave him permission to construct a Bell system locally. He was given the territory of Warren and Butler Counties, outside of Hamilton. The County Commissioners gave him the right-of-way over the highways of the county.

The first exchange was completed in 1880. The early equipment was crude, with wires leading from the exchange through the windows of Bundy's office. The first switchboard was equipped with 50 drops, each 6 inches long with 5 foot cords and Blake transmitters. The first wires used were bare iron, uninsulated and were strung on small poles which went in and out among the trees. Bundy drove over the highways and streets to stake the places where the poles were to go on which to string the wires for his system. When a storm came, the whole system usually went out. Bundy had to get in his buggy and start out to repair the damage.

While the first exchange was equipped to handle 200 subscribers, there were only a dozen the first year and about fifty a year later.

Business men were skeptical as to the benefits the new phone would bring them, but among the original subscribers was the Board of Education, who installed two phones, one at North and one at South School.

Some local citizens were opposed to the transmission of the human voice — thought it wicked. Despite these obstacles the telephone was here to stay, as businessmen soon learned of its value.

The first switchboard had no numbers, and the person calling asked for whom he wanted by name. The early residence rate was \$2.50 a month. Subscribers were permitted to try the new device on approval for three months free of charge.

Eventually the local company became part of the Ohio Bell Telephone Company, which in 1960 served over 25,000 Middletown subscribers.





## **A New School Building**

As Middletown grew into a city, more and more children were enrolled in the public schools. The 4 room building was no longer adequate. Rooms were being rented around the town, but this was not too satisfactory. It became clear that new facilities must be provided.

When Arthur Lefferson, a pioneer of Middletown died in 1869, his heirs decided to subdivide the farm. Across from the beautiful home of the Leffersons on South Main Street, was a plot of level land, which Dr. John Corson, a member of the Board of Education, felt would make an ideal site. Here a beautiful building could be built, with an athletic field and playground. When he suggested a school site of 6 acres, many local citizens were alarmed.

The usual objections were made. "The site is too large. Middletown will never grow that far south. Taxes will go sky high. What's wrong with what we have." The Board refused to listen to the objections and in 1869 purchased the site for approximately \$6,000.

The Board of Education proceeded with its plans. Perhaps they could build a school large enough to provide room for a high school. In April 1870 a committee was appointed to devise a plan for a new school house, and the committee was authorized to visit different places to examine other school buildings and report their findings. On June 11, 1870 the Board's Minutes reported: "... it was resolved to build a School House three stories in height containing 12 rooms at a cost not to exceed \$30,000 complete . . ."

When the Board advertised for bids, they found no contractor who would accept the job at their figure. A local builder, Jacob Margerum, would not construct the building, but he promised as a citizen he would supervise the work. Each contract for separate jobs on the building was let by the Board. As money was needed bonds were issued. Oglesby and Barnitz sold many of these bonds through their eastern banking connections.

Finally in 1872 the fine building was completed. As local Middletonians went from room to room during an open house, they were pleased and proud.

The towers of South School, as it was called, pierced the Middletown skyline. This reminded the citizens of the community that here was a place of opportunity for young people.

In the new building, Room Number 12, was designated as Middletown High School. The first course was to be two years in length. Later the high school took over four rooms on the third floor and it became a four-year course. As the town moved East in 1885 another grade building was erected on what is now the Central school site.

### **Middletown Gets Another Newspaper**

In the 1870's a newspaper was founded in Middletown—the *News-Signal*. Under the editorship of John Q. Baker, Middletown's leading journalist of the day, it became a great newspaper fighting for the prog-





ress of the city. Under Baker, James Cox, later a governor of Ohio and newspaper publisher, received his training.

One day as John Q. Baker sat at his desk, his eyes wandered out his window at the Middletown skyline. He thought of all the progress being made. He thought of the great leaders of the city who were working to build a better community. He thought of the underlying goodness and kindness of Middletonians. He turned back to his desk, and give Middletown its tribute: "The City With A Soul."

### **Sorg: An Industrial Leader**

A rising city must have an industrial base. Only as industries develop in a community, can a city grow. In the period 1870 to 1900 Middletown had a growing industry and a leader of industry. This man was Paul J. Sorg. He did more to make possible Middletown's industrial growth than any other man, with the single exception of George M. Verity.

Legend has it that Sorg came to Middletown with \$500 and built up an estate 30 years later, worth \$5,000,000. Through the boundless energy of this man, a small midwest trading center, became an industrial city. When Sorg came to Middletown about 3,000 people lived here, and after his work was finished the city boasted a population of 10,000. Sorg's genius created the gigantic tobacco industry which was an important factor in Middletown's economic life until 1950.

He took the paper industry out of the era of small local mills into nation wide markets and competition. Small paper mills became large industrial organizations under his magic touch and part of this work still remains in the Sorg Paper Company of today. He convinced other industrialists that Middletown had a future and brought numerous industries to the city. He was Middletown's first captain of industry.

Sorg was born in Wheeling, West Virginia in 1840, the son of Henry and Elizabeth Sorg who had come to America from Germany. After locating at Wheeling, the family decided to move to Cincinnati. They arrived in Cincinnati in 1851 when Paul was 11 years old. The family was so poor that Paul as a boy, sold flowers in the market place of Cincinnati and turned the money over to his mother to spend in the support of the home. Being ambitious, the boy attended night school and obtained a business education. He became an apprentice as a moulder in a foundry and soon was a foreman.

In 1844 John Auer, who had been born 10 years before in Bavaria, Germany, landed in the United States and two years later began to work in a tobacco factory. In 1864 while working as a tobacco roller in Cincinnati, he met Paul J. Sorg. Auer could process tobacco, but he couldn't keep books. While Sorg knew nothing of tobacco, he could keep books, for he had studied bookkeeping at night school. These men organized a firm for the manufacture of tobacco products, starting in Cincinnati with a capitalization of \$6,000 and 28 workers. In 1869 the firm was consolidated with the firm of Wilson and Jacoby, who owned a factory in Cincinnati, but resided in Middletown. The new



firm, organized as Wilson, Sorg and Company moved to Middletown and began the construction of a tobacco factory in the town along the Miami-Erie canal. This factory represented an investment of \$20,000 and had a daily capacity of 1,000 pounds of tobacco. A three story brick building was erected. In 1870 Jacoby sold his interest in the company, and in 1878 Sorg and Auer disposed of their holdings to Wilson and McCallay.

Sorg and Auer now began their own business. They constructed a new building 40 by 140 feet, and in it they installed improved machinery with a total investment of \$60,000. About 4,000 pounds of tobacco could be processed by 150 men in one day. The new plant was located across from the railroad station in the east end. When Auer retired from the firm in 1884, the number of employees of the firm had doubled, and the capacity of the factory had been increased to 10,000 pounds of tobacco daily. Each year brought new additions. Finally the plant covered a whole city block. The factory's product, plug or chewing tobacco, had a world wide reputation. In the eighties Middletown was noted as the third city in the United States in the production of plug tobacco.

In 1898 the Continental Tobacco Company was looking forward to expansion; they entered into negotiations with Sorg and purchased the Middletown plant. Eventually this became part of the American Tobacco Company, which was forced to dissolve into smaller units. When this happened the P. Lorillard Company was re-established, and the Middletown plant was put under its management.

Although the tobacco industry was to continue in Middletown for another half century, Paul J. Sorg turned to other industrial interests. In 1899 the Jacoby Paper Mill was bankrupt; its doors were closed. Paul J. Sorg took over the defunct paper mill and put his son in charge of it. After the mill came under the new ownership, it was reopened as the Sorg Paper Company. It began with two machines and five men.

Through the work of this industrialist several new companies were organized in Middletown. Through Sorg's efforts the McSherry Manufacturing Company, maker of grain drills, and the Miami Cycle Manufacturing Company, which made bicycles, moved their plants to the growing city. It was his capital which brought the Pennsylvania Railroad to Middletown. With his money, Sorg backed the building of a church, a hotel, and an entertainment center—Sorg Opera House.

Upon the death of the Congressman from the Third District in 1894, the Governor of Ohio called a special election so that the vacancy could be filled. Since he had contributed so much to the industrial life of the district, Sorg was nominated on the Democratic ticket, and elected to the short term. In the next regular election he won a full term. His career in Congress was hailed by Civil War veterans as a great success for he obtained many pensions for them. When he went to Washington, he took James Cox with him as his private secretary. In 1896





Sorg retired from public life. He was asked to run for Governor, but declined.

Sorg was greatly respected by the people of Middletown. His beautiful home, a replica of a medieval castle, was one of the showplaces of the valley. In this massive house, he lived with his wife, whom he married in 1876 and their two children.

### **A Middletown Man Becomes Governor**

While Sorg became a representative in Congress, he was not the only one of which Middletown could be proud in the field of politics. A Middletown boy, James E. Campbell, son of Dr. Campbell, had become a lawyer. He was Prosecuting Attorney for Butler County, and then state representative.

In 1889 Middletown's "Jimmy Campbell" was nominated for Governor of the State of Ohio, and elected by a majority of 11,000. However, in 1891 he was defeated by William McKinley, who later became president of the United States. Middletown has always been proud to have given a Governor to Ohio.

Another man who made Middletown proud in the political field was James Cox. Although born in Jacksonburg, he spent much of his early life in Middletown. After being a student of John Q. Baker at Amanda, he became a teacher in the Lemon Township Schools. When Baker became editor of the *News-Signal*, Cox became a reporter for the paper, and so excellent were his articles that he was asked to join the staff of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*.

Upon the election of Sorg to Congress, Cox went to Washington where he gained much experience in politics. In 1896 when Sorg retired from public life, Cox returned home. His next move was to buy the plant of a newspaper in Dayton, and there he began his *Dayton Daily News*.

In a few years, Cox again entered public life to become a representative. After his service, he was elected Governor of Ohio, and during his first term, new school laws were passed and the Conservancy Act of Ohio became law. Although he was defeated in 1914, he was reelected in 1916 and 1918, serving for three terms as our chief executive. So successful had he been as governor that in 1920 the Democrats nominated him for the presidency with Franklin D. Roosevelt running as vice president. He ran on a platform endorsing the Wilsonian policies and favoring our entry into the League of Nations, but was defeated by another Ohioan, Warren G. Harding.

long a time ago, and it is now a part of the history of the country.

For many years, the people of the country have been suffering from a great deal of trouble, and it is now a part of the history of the country.

THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY

The history of the country is a long and interesting one, and it is now a part of the history of the country.

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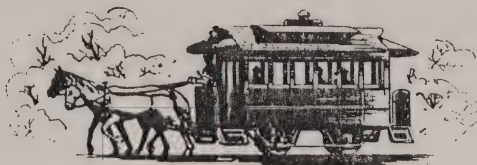
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# Into the Twentieth Century



When Middletonians awoke late on that morning of January 1, 1901, they not only were to greet a new year, but a new century of progress for an old river town. That evening they found at their door the largest issue of the *Middletown News-Signal* ever issued, a scholarly edition recording the past achievements of the community, as well as predictions of great things to come. The editorial introduction to the issue read:

"The nineteenth century closes, its history is recorded, the curtain is drawn and a new era is opened to the world. The dawn of the twentieth century breaks upon us and fair Middletown, the pride of the Miami Valley, hails the new epoch with feelings of mingled pride and anxiety. Proud of her resources, anxious for their development, she rears her proud head among the cities of the state and points to her achievements in the past as an indication of what her native enterprise may accomplish in the future."

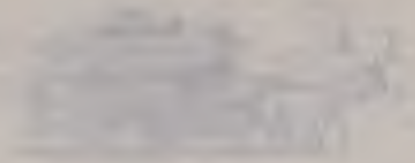
But the big news of that January morning was the announcement that the American Rolling Mill Company would soon begin operation in the city. The article read in part:

"About the middle of January, the wheels of Middletown's new mammoth industry, the American Rolling Mill Company, will begin to turn and within a short time thereafter 500 skilled workmen will be at work. The buildings are all completed and the machinery is now being put in place. This giant plant was built in the city through the efforts of the Industrial Commission. Mr. George M. Verity, the president and treasurer of the new company, is known as one of the most progressive men of the Queen City."

The newspaper reported that Seymour Tibbals had spoken to the Elks on New Year's Resolutions, but had to leave early for Franklin to catch the last streetcar home. The electric car which rattled down the tracks laid in the center of Tytus Avenue to Main Street and on to Hamilton was an innovation. It first arrived in 1896 and had a regular schedule from Cincinnati up through the Miami Valley finally to Lake Erie. It continued its daily runs until 1938.

Many local citizens were employed at good wages at the Ling, Van Sickle Buggy Company, which had originated in 1857. This had been the first firm in the Miami Valley to build cheap buggies, which was quite a blow to the craftsmen of West Elkton. By using "mass produc-

# Into the Twelfth Century



When the twelfth century began, the world was a very different place from what it is now. The great cities of the West were still in their infancy, and the power of the Pope was at its height. The Crusades were just beginning, and the world was full of adventure and discovery.

The twelfth century was a time of great change and growth. The great cathedrals of the West were being built, and the power of the Pope was at its height. The Crusades were just beginning, and the world was full of adventure and discovery.

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tion" methods, Ling, Van Sickle had cut the cost of buggies from \$350 to \$150 each, turning out in 1900 some 3,500 buggies. They were shipped to all parts of the United States. The plant gave a choice of carriages, surreys, and runabouts. The Decatur Buggy Company had moved here from Greensburg, Indiana. No telling how this buggy industry would develop. Most Middletonians thought the automobile was impractical, and the old actor who delivered the monologue at the Sorg Opera House on the "Ride in the Automobile" had the people rolling in the aisles.

The name in the news January 1, 1901, was that of Paul J. Sorg — he was Middletown's leading industrialist, leading politician, and leading citizen. The News-Signal saluted him with a fine picture and the statement that it was the master hand of Sorg who brought Middletown into the Industrial Age. There were the Sorg Paper Company, the Sorg Opera House, the Sorg Mansion, and the biggest industry in town — Sorg's Tobacco Plant.

The Middletown Machine Company was making "Woodpecker Engines," and McSherry was turning out farm implements. Palmer Milling Company was making fine flour. In the paper industry the news was that the Gardner plant had burned to the ground and the city had given \$5,000 to help them rebuild. Other paper manufacturers listed were Wardlow-Thomas, Tytus, Wrenn, Sorg, Oglesby, Advance, Sabin-Robbins. The Ohio Bag Company was turning out 1,250,000 paper bags a day. The Miami Cycle Company was turning out the best bicycles in the world, and the teen-agers liked the one built for two.

There was other news that January morning. The Home Culture Club was investigating the unsatisfactory condition of the schools — all three of them. The lighting was bad, and the seats worn out. The linen roller towels placed in each room for the use of teacher and pupils were considered a breeder of disease, causing pinkeye and rashes. The First Baptist Church had raised \$30,000 toward a new church. Hydrophobia was threatening the farmers' cattle. At Franklin they were planning the erection of a permanent home for Chautauqua on 40 acres of the Vanderveer farm. An auditorium to seat 5,000 was planned under the trees. Miami Valley Chautauqua had been started in 1896 at the old fairgrounds west of Franklin. The traction company promised to build an eight-foot bridge across the river.

The society pages reported the great successes of New Year's parties the evening before. Most of the parties had broken up at two and three o'clock in the morning.

Such was that day January 1, 1901. As the years of the nineteenth century had slipped quietly by, few people realized that Paul J. Sorg had about lived his life. He had only one more year to live. But Middletown had waiting in the wings a new leader. At that time they did not recognize this new leader as he was only 36 years of age. He had been in Middletown one year, coming in 1900 to build a mill. He had come to a small city — 9,215 — with a small steel plant. A few Middletonians had

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investigated this man, for they realized he held the key to the future of the river town. They found many interesting things about him — for George M. Verity was an unusual young man.

Born on April 22, 1865, at the close of a terrible Civil War, to Jonathan and Mary Ann Verity was this son, George. Father Jonathan Verity had left the farm to follow a call to serve his God and fellow men by becoming a backwoods, circuit-riding minister. Early in life George lost his mother and, since his father was constantly on the move, he had to learn to adjust to many kinds of places and people. One of young Verity's dreams was that when he was grown he could find a place to settle down.

His education was received first from grammar schools in different communities where his father served as a minister. He graduated from high school at Georgetown, Ohio, and finished his formal education at Nelson's Business College in Cincinnati.

It was during the summer vacation that George M. Verity served as a storekeeper for the camp grounds of the Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist Church of which his father was a member. Here he gained real interest in business and showed sound judgment in running the store. That store was to do more than help young Verity launch his business career.

One day Miss Jean Standish, daughter of a prominent Cincinnati grocer, walked into the store. A friendship developed which was to lead to marriage. The same year that Verity met the Standish family, Mr. Standish died, and Mrs. Standish, knowing of Verity's business ability, asked him to take over management of the family's wholesale grocery store and oyster depot. He took over the operation of the business and worked long hours. He even delivered oysters along the streets of Cincinnati to hold the store's customers during hard times. Although he made a success of managing the store, Verity did not believe that the independent grocery could successfully compete with the chain of Kroger stores spreading in Cincinnati. He advised Mrs. Standish to sell her store in 1887, which she did.

Major H. P. Lloyd, who had heard of Verity's business ability, asked the young man to come to his office for an interview. Lloyd and his partner, L. L. Sagendorf, had started the American Steel Roofing Company on the Public Landing in Cincinnati in 1885. The business had grown, and Sagendorf in 1889 wanted to open a similar plant in Philadelphia. A new manager was needed for the local plant, and so great was Lloyd's faith in Verity that he offered the 24-year-old man the job. This company bought iron and steel sheets and converted them into building materials. Verity accepted the managership at \$100 a month, then went to Jean Standish's home and asked her to set the wedding date.

For ten years Verity managed that small company, making it into a very successful and profitable business. One day a young man came



into Verity's office and said he had plans for a mill that would make steel and roll it into sheets under one roof. Verity had thought of this too, as it would cut costs as well as provide a reliable source of sheet steel. From that time on, Verity began to dream of his own steel plant. This dream was to become the Armco Steel Corporation.

Now Verity began to look around for a likely place to build a steel manufacturing plant. After careful consideration, the sites he preferred were located at Zanesville and Middletown. Zanesville offered the advantages of cheaper fuel than Middletown. Both towns offered him a desirable site and financial aid.

It was at this point that Daniel Doty again re-enters the Middletown story. After moving from his log cabin home, he had built a large brick house on a small rise above the Miami plain, which was actually the second terrace above the river. A short distance below his homesite the Miami-Erie Canal ran through his farm. His descendants had kept much of the land and the townspeople often gathered in Doty's Grove, as they called it, for special community gatherings such as camp meetings, outings and picnics.

The town was slowly surrounding it. It had become a very valuable site and an ideal one for a manufacturing plant. When young Verity saw it, he was sold. He looked down at the canal, which he thought would provide low shipping costs for sheet steel to Cincinnati markets. This would be a greater advantage than Zanesville's cheap fuel. This was the place! He notified E. H. McKnight, who as chairman of the Industrial Commission had worked hard to have the plant come to Middletown, that the enterprise would locate here. The contract was agreed upon and signed. Railroad switches made possible loading and unloading at the door of the plant. Verity agreed that the new plant would employ 150 men with a \$25,000-a-month payroll. On December 2, 1899, the American Rolling Mill Company was organized with a capital of \$200,000, later increased to \$500,000 when plans were made to enlarge the plant.

### Cornerstone for a Steel Plant

By July 12, 1900, work had progressed to the point that it was time to lay the cornerstone of the new plant. What a day that was when all Middletown turned out to welcome the American Rolling Mill Company. The Sixth Infantry of the U.S. Army was camped at Doty's Woods, and local citizens asked the regiment to join the gala parade. Colonel William Sullivan then joined with the local company of the National Guard. The Middletown women added color to the parade with a flower display in which buggies, wagons, and horses were decorated with lovely blossoms. All business buildings were decorated with bunting and flying flags. The stores were closed; factories and mills shut down. Everybody was in the parade from baby to grandmother. The parade started at the City Building, then on Broad Street, and ended up at Doty's Grove. Here the citizens listened to the speeches.





W. S. Harlan, city solicitor, offered the welcoming address on behalf of the citizens of Middletown. He said:

"You have demonstrated that you have the fullest confidence in yourselves, in our city, and in the future. We extend to you a most cordial greeting and welcome. May your success be as substantial and durable as the splendid structure you are building. May there ever exist harmony between employer and employee. May your business be profitable and a blessing to this community."

To this welcome, Mr. Verity replied:

"I wish to welcome you one and all to yonder spot where our works are in the process of construction. The location is in itself historic, having been acquired from the government by Daniel Doty and settled upon by him almost a century ago. . . We hope that with your assistance we can make it famous as the location of the first steel plant and sheet mills in this broad valley, and that for you it will only prove a start in the right direction . . ."

Good, old John Q. Baker felt that this was a great day for Middletown, his "City with a Soul." The entire issue of the *News-Signal* was devoted to the great story of that day. Baker predicted that this new industry "is destined to renew again our old time energy and place Middletown high in the ranks of great manufacturing cities of Ohio."

To begin an independent steel company in those days took courage, for the United States Steel Corporation had begun its program of consolidating many independent rolling mills into one large national organization. Verity had to have the same kind of courage that Doty had when he started out for the wilderness. Modern pioneering is different, but it is just as dangerous. A small steel plant in the Miami Valley against a giant corporation with billions of dollars behind it would not make competition easy. But Verity was planning a new and more efficient type of steel mill which could successfully compete. Before this mill was put in operation, the iron and steel business had been very specialized—one company bought iron bars or billets and manufactured them into sheet iron or steel, while galvanized and corrugated iron were made by separate companies. The American Rolling Mill Company was the first to bring all the scattered branches of the steel industry into one integrated operation at one plant.

In March 1901 the fires under the furnaces were lighted. Some 50,500 pounds of pig iron were put into the furnace. Limestone was added. In 12 hours and 50 minutes this iron and limestone melted into steel. Sparks flew in every direction when the fluid steel flowed into the ladle. Then the crane lifted the ladle and poured the steel into molds. The metal cooled, and the ingots were stripped from the molds. Superintendent Robert Carnahan had poured his first heat. As a souvenir of this event, some of the steel was made into a round bar and cut into disks. These were engraved and sent to friends in Middletown as paper weights.



With the growth of the electrical industry, a new type of steel was needed. Dynamos and motors took a special type steel of uniform high quality. Westinghouse Electric sent a man to Middletown to describe the type of steel needed and to test Armco steel. Carnahan went to work, using new methods, new materials, and new ideas. In June 1905 the first shipment of electrical sheet steel was on its way to the customer. Carnahan had produced a new type of steel, a specialty steel, which was to make Armco respected in the steel industry.

### **Armco's East Works**

Armco expanded rapidly, with sales increasing each year. Finally in 1909 the company had used every foot of building space available at the Central Works site. The development of the electrical industry, which demanded more and more specialty steel, had put Armco on the industrial map. Armco Ingot Iron had become known for its fine qualities by steel processors, and more and more uses for the rust-resisting iron were being found. The old furnaces and machinery could not keep up with the demand. Armco would have to expand. Since there was no place on Curtis Street for expansion, this meant the construction of a new plant, which would in every way dwarf the old one. When new stock was offered for this expansion, it sold quickly.

When other cities heard that Armco intended to expand and build a new plant, they tried to induce the company to change its location. Many offers were made. When Middletown heard of these offers, the people became alarmed. V. C. Hatfield, who had helped organize the Quixotic Club in 1870, which was reorganized as the Business Men's Club in 1900, called a special meeting of local citizens. A committee of prominent Middletonians met with Verity, and told him that this city wanted to keep Armco, and that they were willing to make any sacrifices necessary to do so. Verity told them the problems the industry faced—that of raw materials, transportation, fuel, water, sewage, and competition. He also pointed out that the company did not want money or land from a community. It did demand the public utilities necessary for a growing industry. The company wanted good sewage, a special pipe line from the river for an ample water supply, and the right of way for new railroad lines to serve the plant. City government and business said these would be supplied.

Then Verity went on to explain that the company did want some other things, not for itself, but for the community in which its people lived and worked.

On November 9, 1909 a special dinner meeting was held at the Elk's Club which was to have a great effect upon the future of this city. The subject of that meeting was: "Greater Middletown: Its Possibilities." All the important people of the community were there. As Verity entered a cheer went up. When he spoke to that great club, he stated: "As regards the responsibility of locating this new enterprise in Middletown, we stand ready to share with you, but we are not willing to





assume it alone. This is Middletown's golden opportunity and her people must share the resultant responsibility if they care to reap the reward."

Out of that meeting came the program for "Greater Middletown." Included in this program was the building of a library, the establishment of a YMCA program, a public hospital, planning a park and recreation program, expanding school services.

The immediate problems were solved first. A larger sewer was soon underway, and the waterlines were laid. The Middletown Realty Company was formed to lay out building lots and erect new homes. These homes were to be modern in every way. Park Place was laid out, and another subdivision stretching to the north and east called the Highlands. Southward the town went to *Bon Veue*. Lots and houses were sold almost at cost. Banks and Savings and Loan Associations made financial assistance possible so that 1,000 families could have new homes.

For the proposed expansion, Armco purchased four farms in Lemon Township abutting the corporation line plus parts of three others. This gave them a site of over 400 acres for the new East Side Works. The company's engineering department went to work making more than 40,000 blue prints which were required for the plant and its equipment. In March 1910 Middletown citizens and officials of the steel plant gathered on the site, and the first spade of dirt was lifted. To help erect the plant hundreds of construction men were brought to Middletown. Soon over the once quiet countryside, men, like ants, swarmed day and night in feverish activity. By September 1911, a new plant had arisen, one of the most efficient and modern in the industry, in what was only two years before a corn field. September 11, 1911 the first heat was poured at the new plant. General Superintendent Charles R. Hook, later to succeed Verity as president of the corporation, interviewed and hired hundreds of new workers for the East Side Works. Hook welded these men into a cooperative team. He built up an organization of men devoted not only to Armco, but to civic duty.

Armco had fulfilled its part of the bargain. The new plant was built. Local citizens recalled now the challenge contained in Verity's concluding remarks at the Elk's in 1909: "I wish to make one earnest plea for united effort, for a united people working for a common cause for such cooperation in every thing that pertains to the advancement of Middletown. Men of Middletown, what do you say? What will you do?"

### Civic Improvements

One of the first things that Mr. Verity had suggested was a Public Library. Here came the first test. What would Middletown do? Hamilton had opened the Lane Public Library in 1866. In 1891 a Middletown Library was opened in a room of the Methodist Church. With 600 books purchased from a \$1000 gift from C. F. Gunckel and selected by W. H. Todhunter, it was opened to the public. Due to lack of interest

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and support, the library closed some twenty years later. One man had carried on the fight to open a new public library in its own building. That man was W. H. Todhunter, lawyer and citizen. The day after Verity's challenging address, a committee was organized to secure a library. G. A. Wilmer, a local business man, was elected chairman.

It was decided to ask the people of Middletown to donate the money to buy a site, and to ask Andrew Carnegie to help furnish money to build the library. Carnegie promised to give \$25,000 toward building a Carnegie Free Public Library. This gift of a famous steel maker to a rising steel town was very appropriate and much appreciated.

The people of Middletown showed they were ready to meet the challenge, for within one week the money was pledged. Land at the corner of First and Curtis was purchased, for it was near the new Middletown High School which had opened on Central Avenue in 1908. At that time it was also near the geographical center of the town. City council set up a board of library trustees, composed of W. H. Todhunter, B. F. Harwitz, L. T. Palmer, Gustav Wilmer, Dr. George Lummis and Cornelius Sullivan. They elected Todhunter as president, Carnegie agreed to start the building, and the city promised to spend at least \$2500 a year for library purposes.

On January 1, 1913 the library became a reality. Since the committee had some money left after buying the site, this was spent on books. The group decided to buy books dealing with the lives of the great men of our country and its history. From this small collection the library grew. It has taken two additions to hold all the books, the last one being completed in 1950.

Verity believed that Middletown needed a Young Men's Christian Association. The first such organization had been formed in 1890, but had been disbanded due to lack of financial support. It was housed in the building now used as headquarters for the Middletown Civic Association. When Verity came to Middletown, there was no YMCA. Through his efforts was organized the Middletown Brotherhood, which provided a program for the youth of the city. Very meager dues were charged and everyone was eligible to join regardless of religious affiliation. Athletic training and programs were provided.

However, it soon became apparent that the national program of the YMCA was needed in Middletown to provide trained guidance and leadership. At a meeting held in September, 1917, George M. Verity moved that the Brotherhood be merged into the national YMCA. This received unanimous approval. Through the famous million dollar Civic Drive of 1920, the money for a new building was raised and construction began. In 1923 Middletown had a fine new YMCA with gymnasium, bowling alleys, swimming pool, banquet room, a series of classrooms, and a dormitory for men.

Across the street from the YMCA a new building was also under construction in 1922. If Middletown were to be an industrial and







business center, other men would have to come here to carry on business. They would need a hotel where they could stay overnight in comfort. The city required a place for large meetings and banquets, as well as for smaller social affairs.

The Chamber of Commerce appointed a commission to secure funds. Stock in the sum of \$265,000 was sold, and the Middletown Hotel Company was organized and incorporated. An architect drew plans, and soon a handsome brick building of five stories, called The Manchester Hotel, found a place in the skyline of the city.

Although an industrial worker is safer at work than at home, accidents happen everywhere. Sickness strikes and there are times when hospital care is needed. Realizing as our industry grew, and our population increased, that Middletown would need a hospital, Verity had included this challenge: Provide a hospital. Up to that time local citizens had to go to one of the surrounding cities. As late as 1917 there was no such facility in this city. The Business Men's Club appointed a committee to study the problem; its first meeting was held November 18, 1910. They selected a site on a beautiful hilltop which was away from the center of the city at that time. Some people objected to this as being too far away from the center of town. However, time has proved that this was a wise selection.

Under the laws of the State of Ohio, the Middletown Hospital Association was incorporated in 1913 on a non-profit basis. A campaign to raise funds was started with fine results. The war held up construction, but in March 1917 the first patient was admitted to the new hospital on the hill. A nurses home followed in 1918. In October 1924 the School of Nursing was established which was to prove of great value to the community. Verity Hall became its home. In 1925, 1938, and in 1956, large additions were made to the Hospital. Its capacity had been gradually increased from 28 beds to over 300.

In order to coordinate the growth of Greater Middletown, the Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1917 with the backing of all the industries. The Chamber proposed a program of improvements, which within a few years was almost completed. Its platform included among other things: a civic center, better streets and lighting, improvement of schools, parks and swimming pools, and the planting of trees in commemoration of soldiers.

With the passage of a bond issue came the building of new school plants, and the new high school on Girard Avenue opened in 1925. A successful crusade for a \$1,000,000 civic fund in 1920 resulted in the construction of the YMCA, a wing to the hospital, establishment of the Civic Association, a Girls' Club, and improvements at the library.

In 1921 the Middletown Recreation Association was organized. It followed a policy of utilizing existing baseball and volleyball facilities in building a recreational program. A summer program was planned for children. The late W. O. Barnitz donated 3 acres of land to be used for



baseball and other sports. The Mary Oglesby playground was established and volleyball and basketball were popular at Lakeside Park. Two hundred acres of rolling woodland was developed by Armco for a park for the entire community. The glen called "Bunny Hollow" was set aside for children.

The town saw the need of a swimming pool, but the people wanted to build one which was different. They wanted their pool in a natural surrounding; one that would remind them of the old swimming hole. The pool was built in part of the Bull Run ravine at Sunset Park. With this natural site it was possible to have one high bank bordered by fine trees. When the city promised to furnish the water, money from the Civic Fund was appropriated to build the pool. It was finished in 1922, and was 40 feet wide and 270 feet long, varying in depth from 3 to 7½ feet. A wading pool was designed for the youngsters. As the city increased in size new municipal pools were added.

For children who needed sunlight and fresh air, a Fresh Air Camp was established in 1922. It was originally for children from homes where there was tuberculosis, which at one time was a very prevalent disease here. In the fresh air with good nourishing food, the children's health improved.

The children of the community needed a scout organization. In 1919 W. J. Beck called a meeting to organize a local council of the Boy Scouts. This was financed by the Civic Fund, making possible a full time Scout Executive. Some of the early good deeds of the Scouts were: collection of 1000 books for the public library; participation in Red Cross drives; aid in conducting conventions, clinics, picnics and field days. One year after the Boy Scouts were underway, the Girl Scouts were organized with the same backing.

In 1923 the citizens of Middletown felt that a new method was needed for the collection and distribution of civic funds since many organizations were conducting drives each year for necessary funds. It was planned that all these agencies should be administered by one association with one budget and one board of directors. While some cities had Community Chests, it was decided that some aspects of such an organization could be improved. Thus was born the Middletown Civic Association. Many local civic undertakings are supported by this organization.

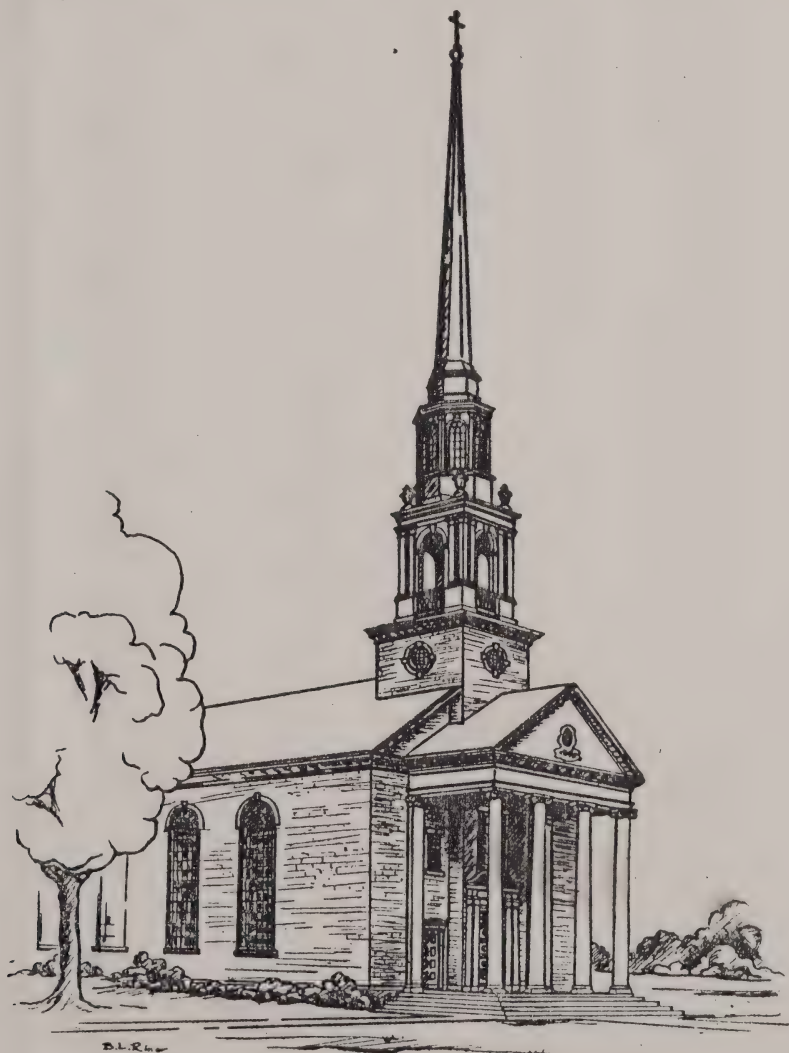
During this pleasant progress at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was one great disaster. Commencing on Sunday night, March 23, rain fell uninterrupted over the Miami Valley for 72 hours. By midnight, March 24, the river stood at 15 feet. The next day found levees breaking, and the lowlands of Middletown covered. Over 1,000 families had to find refuge from the surging Miami waters. This Great 1913 Flood cost the city and the valley over \$100,000,000 and the citizens united to make sure this would not happen again by organizing the Miami Conservancy District with its flood retaining dams.





The first twenty years of the twentieth century had brought great changes to the growing city along the Miami River. The Census of 1920 showing a population of 23,594 told a story. In 1900 the same report had read 9,215. This had been a phenomenal growth. Middletown had become known as the TIP city — Tobacco, Iron and Paper.

Slowly, however, it was the magic sign of the triangle with Armco across it, which was to become the real seal of the city. In each of its periods of history, Middletown had had a great leader. This period had produced another name to add to the honor roll of the city — George M. Verity.



First Presbyterian Church

The first two years of the twentieth century have been marked by a rapid increase in the population of the city, and the growth of the city has been rapid. The population of the city in 1900 was 100,000, and in 1910 it was 150,000. The growth of the city has been rapid, and the population of the city has increased by 50% in ten years.

The growth of the city has been rapid, and the population of the city has increased by 50% in ten years. The growth of the city has been rapid, and the population of the city has increased by 50% in ten years.



The First Church of the City

## Middletown: All - America City



From a log cabin on the bank of the Miami to a thriving metropolitan district in the span of 170 years is the story written by the people of Middletown, Ohio. From a family of four pioneers to a growing city of thousands of families and 50,000 individuals is the record of growth. From a sawmill and grist mill powered by a water wheel to a great industrial complex of many modern industries is the accomplishment of the community.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
 LIBRARY  
 1000 S. MICHIGAN AVE.  
 CHICAGO, ILL. 60607



Historic and geographic forces merged to make Middletown the site of industrial development. First there was the Miami River — highway to everywhere in a period of no passable roads. Then the Miami-Erie Canal opened up Eastern and European markets to local products. The locomotive whistle meant a faster and more convenient transportation system for a growing town. Power from the hydraulic canal and then a developing electrical industry added impetus. Paper, tobacco and steel became giant, dominating industries, around which developed many smaller economic enterprises.

During the twentieth century, manufacturing plants began to spread out from a few concentrated areas. National defense demanded that our gigantic industrial potential should not be concentrated in one small area, subject to pin-point atomic bombing. The Miami Valley, located in the mid-west, away from the more vulnerable seaport towns, yet in an important manufacturing area, close to great markets, has become an ideal site for industrial development. In fact, geographers remark that this Miami Valley is rapidly developing into the Ruhr Valley of America.

The Miami Valley with almost 5500 square miles of level, rolling land with a population nearing 2,000,000 is an excellent region for industrial development. Within 400 miles live 40 percent of the population of the United States. Eight major rail trunk lines pass through the valley, three through Middletown, and inter-state truck lines reach 25,000,000 people overnight. The Ohio River, improved in recent years, gives access to 15,000 miles of inland waterways. The new St. Lawrence Seaway opens up world ports to Ohio commerce. A north-south Super-highway connects Middletown to the East-West Turnpike and the ports along the Great Lakes.

Located in the middle of all this development in the great Miami Valley is Middletown. It is a city with a future.

In the 1890's a great speaker came to the Sorg Opera House to deliver a famous lecture. He was Russell Conwell who told this story in his "Acres of Diamonds" address. There was a man who lived in India, who wanted to find acres of diamonds. He sold all his land and searched the world in vain. The man who had purchased the Indian's farm found the diamonds in the back yard! This is a story that young people looking for careers might well consider. They may think fortune and success lie far from Middletown. But like the Indian, they, too, may find the search futile. Others may discover the secret — the secret that many opportunities exist right in Middletown. Expanding industrial capacity has meant more and better jobs for young people.

Middletown keeps reaching out for more and more territory in which to build and expand. Her corporation signs are being pulled up and replanted farther and farther from the heart of Vail's Village.

A city never stands still if it hopes to grow. The Twentieth Century brought progress in all fields. As industrial history was written in one

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold, crisp air. It felt like a fresh blanket after a long, warm blanket. The ground below was a mix of green fields and brown patches, suggesting a recent harvest. The sky was a pale blue, with a few wispy clouds scattered across it. I took a deep breath, savoring the scent of the earth and the promise of a new day.

As I walked through the fields, I noticed the texture of the soil under my feet. It was soft and yielding, like a warm embrace. The sun was low in the sky, casting a golden glow over the landscape. The fields were a patchwork of different shades of green, each representing a different crop. The air was filled with the gentle rustle of leaves and the distant hum of bees. I felt a sense of peace and tranquility, a moment of pure connection with nature.

In the distance, I saw a small cluster of buildings, their roofs covered in a layer of snow. The snow was a brilliant white, contrasting sharply with the dark roofs and the surrounding landscape. The buildings were nestled together, their forms softened by the snow. I walked towards them, my steps leaving a trail in the snow. The air was still, and the only sound was the crunch of snow under my feet. I felt a sense of wonder and awe, as if I had discovered a hidden world.

expansion after another, so was community development. Even though Middletown had a good city, the people wanted to make it better, and then, the best.

In July 1947 another great movement of citizens was organized for community improvement. This city, like all others, had been involved in the many problems presented by World War II. Great industrial expansion had come with the increasing demand for more and more steel. Every industry felt the exhaustion of war production. With the return of peace, came the return of servicemen to be absorbed into local industry with many problems of readjustment.

Now the war was over, and Middletonians began to see that their community problems needed to be studied and solved. First a citizen's group was organized to see what needed to be done. This group decided that there were 14 points where improvement was needed. One of these points was the recommendation that a city manager-commission type of government be established. While Middletown had operated with a city manager, he did not have independent authority. He acted as only the business manager of the city under the commissioners. A charter change was recommended which would give the city manager well-defined duties, and in 1949 this amendment was adopted by the citizens. The first official city manager, as understood in today's functions and duties, was appointed. He was the capable Herbert Starick, who came in 1949.

A citizen's group working with the new City Manager, and the City Commission, then under the chairmanship of Francis Carmody, drew up a program of capital improvements needed. This was known as the Progress Program, and included such recommendations as improved fire protection, better traffic lighting and control, a Shafor-Nelbar Underpass, improvement and extension of the park program. A new sewer program with a sewage treatment plant was planned.

To better provide for the youth of the city the recreation program was extended into the winter months with school gymnasiums being used two periods a week in after school hours. Additional parks were opened under the supervision of the Parks and Recreation program. Knothole baseball and Pee-Wee Football leagues provided fun for hundreds of boys.

In order to double hospital capacity, a \$2,000,000 campaign was conducted, and by 1959 through a series of additions and some remodeling the goal had been more than accomplished. Church groups moved ahead with individual building programs, with some 64 churches adding to their facilities or making extensive improvements to existing facilities. Middletown became proud of the new Art Center, a Symphony Orchestra, an enlarged Library, off-street parking lots, and improved city services. Many plans were underway for the improvement of down-town shopping including the Central Plaza.



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The Progress Program of the decade 1950-1960 was the work of over 12,000 citizens serving on numerous committees for the betterment of the city.

Middletown's Civic Association, under Tom Venable's leadership, is moving forward. The Youth Building Program was organized in the spring of 1957. This was planned as a 12 year, pay-as-you-go program of civic improvement. The emphasis was on youth with improvements at the new Girl Scout Camp Stonybrook, and Boy Scout Camp Hook. Fresh Air Camp was given a new building and other ground improvements. In the plans for the sixties were an annex to the YMCA, remodeling of the American Legion, and a new Youth Activities Building to house the many activities sponsored by the Civic Association. All agencies of the Association were to profit in some way from the increased giving of Middletonians to their unique organization.

Another group of active citizens recommended a school expansion program. An Ohio State University survey outlined a complete program of improvement for the Middletown area schools. Citizens voted for a 6½ million dollar building program in 1956, to be completed by 1962. This program was planned to bring all existing structures through additions and modifications up to a high standard of physical facilities for all the children of the district. Where needed, gymnasium-auditorium additions were constructed. Then new buildings were constructed for the growing school population. Old Central was replaced by a new fire-proof building. Wildwood and Creekview elementary schools were planned. Two new Junior Highs were added to the system at Amanda and Manchester. A large vocational building and cafeteria went up at Middletown High School. Improved instructional programs were initiated under the direction of the Board of Education, presided over by Joseph Woodruff, and Superintendent Howard Cromwell.

By the early sixties 25 schools were serving almost 15,000 Middletown area students, whereas 100 years before Middletown had had only one school building.

On January 8, 1958 Middletown was saluted as one of the All-America cities of the year. The National Municipal League and Look Magazine sponsored this award. Here is the citation written for Middletown, Ohio, in giving this honor, which came to only 11 other cities:

"Middletown, Ohio. This city faced many problems of postwar growth and inadequate municipal services. A Voters' League worked up a 14 point improvement program, which was approved by the community in 1947. A series of related community-betterment programs followed. These included charter revision to provide a commission-manager form of government, consolidation of city and township schools, including complete racial integration; and a modernized hospital with doubled capacity."

But even as Middletown received this award, she paused only long



enough for a parade. New plans for community improvement were soon in the making. 1959 saw the reorganization of the Middletown Area Chamber of Commerce, which issued a bulletin entitled: "This Is Our Plan for Building a Better Community." It was a design for the Middletown of the sixties. Under three major headings, the Chamber surveyed and reported on needs for improvement in 24 specific areas.

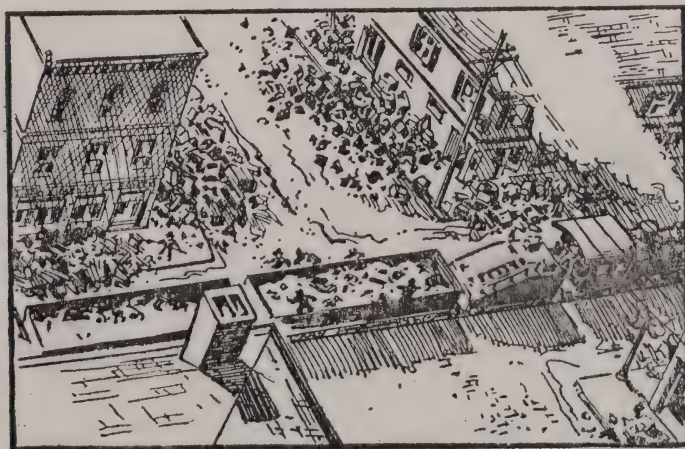
The Chamber of Commerce pointed out the need for downtown development, with emphasis on retail activities. Further industrial development of the community was urged accompanied by better housing and transportation facilities.

Civic affairs was a major concern of the group. The group planned to work for better community development with attention to zoning, traffic and parking. Expanded educational, cultural and recreational facilities were studied.

Committees working under President Donald Driscoll drew up specific recommendations for a better Middletown in the nineteen sixties. The stimulating, exciting plan of action meant Middletown would move forward.

Middletown is a community of people and the people are you. What the Middletown of tomorrow is, will be determined by what each citizen wants it to become. Here in the city is a frontier of tomorrow. Science and industry are building that new city. You are to take part in that exciting development.

Proud of its historic past, with faith in its destiny, Middletown moves forward with confidence to its 175th Birthday in 1966. Such is the story of Middletown, U.S.A.—An All-America City.



Cleaning up after the 1913 flood — Main street and Central Avenue

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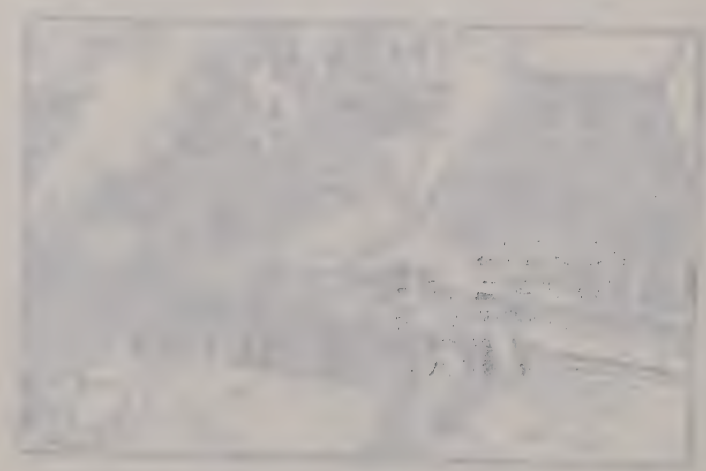
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## SPECIAL SECTION

# Industrial Middletown



### Geographic Background

Middletown is located in the middle Miami Valley, in the northeastern part of Butler County. It is situated in an area long known as a rich agricultural and manufacturing region in Southwestern Ohio. The Miami Valley is made up of eleven counties, which are drained by the Great and Little Miami Rivers. It is a densely populated region, where the inhabitants enjoy a high standard of living. While the Miami Valley has only about 11 percent of the area of Ohio, it is the home of almost a quarter of Ohio's population. Almost three-fourths of the people in the Miami Valley live in its towns and cities — it is an urbanized area.

The town is built along the terraces east of the flood plain of the Great Miami River. The valley of the river is characterized by a series of flats, known as terraces composed of sand and gravel. These are at varying heights above the flood plain, which is composed of the same materials. Middletown stretches from neighboring Franklin southward to Amanda and Excello along this flood plain. The town is 658 feet above sea level.

Since Middletown's early prosperity was built on its rich agricultural hinterland, and since many of the industrial establishments of today are dependent on the large underground supply of water, an explanation of the geological background of the area may be of interest. It was the glacier along with the river, which produced the rich soil of the region and gave it an abundant water supply. At one time in geological history, the whole Middletown area was a blue limestone plateau, which was later covered by the glacier, which removed much of the plateau, covering the area with deposits of drift material. On the upper terraces, shallow deposits of ground limestone may still be found. These drift materials were dropped on the rock bed. The lowest of these stratified deposits is boulder clay, which can be seen along the bank of the river. As this was a glacier deposit, branches and roots of trees and other forms of vegetation may be found in the clay. While in some places a tough blue clay or "hard pan" can be seen, the common, yellow clay is the more wide spread. Another element of drift in this area is the sand and gravel which in the Middletown city area is quite noticeable, and this is found over deposits of clay. Over the gravel beds are deposits of sand and loam.

After the glacier retreated, water covered the valley, which was 400 feet lower than it is today, and during this time the drift accumulated. When the continent rose, the Miami River had to cut its channel deeper and deeper. The glacier was responsible for changing the channel of the Miami River in several places.

During the glacial period, an ice cap two miles thick covered the Miami Valley. It ground off the hilltops and filled in the valley, making a plain. At Middletown, the Miami River Valley ranges from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 miles in width with the flat floor of the valley  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 miles wide. A buried valley of 200 to 300 feet deep passes under the city and the present channel of the river. This buried valley filled with glacial drift furnishes a gigantic reservoir, from which the ground water is pumped, most of it being used for industrial purposes. Both the paper and steel

# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



## THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The University of Chicago is a private research university in Chicago, Illinois. It was founded in 1890 and is one of the leading universities in the United States. The university is known for its commitment to academic excellence and its diverse student body. It has a long history of producing world-class scholars and leaders in various fields of study. The university's research output is highly influential, and it has a strong reputation for its contributions to knowledge and society. The University of Chicago is a member of the Association of American Universities and is ranked among the top universities in the world. It offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, and it is a hub for cutting-edge research and innovation. The university's campus is located in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, and it is home to some of the most beautiful buildings in the city. The University of Chicago is a place where the pursuit of knowledge is a way of life, and it is a source of pride for its students, faculty, and alumni.

industries drain heavily on this water supply. The glacier, which may have covered the Middletown area three times, contributed to the industrial development by making possible this great water supply. The river keeps bringing in water. The river also made the alluvial valleys which furnished this area with rich soils and bountiful crops. Agriculture gave Middletown its start.

In the period of early development, the river was Middletown's great highway of transportation and commerce. Today the industry of the city depends in large measure upon the railroads. Middletown has the facilities of three trunk lines which follow the Miami Valley. The lines which serve Middletown are: the Cincinnati-Cleveland line of the New York Central, which cuts through the center of the city; the Pennsylvania which has a branch freight line entering the city from the southeast; and the main line of the Baltimore and Ohio running along the west side of the River.

The New York Central ties Middletown in with mid-west America, with direct connections between Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis. This has given the line the nickname of "Big Four." The Pennsylvania line serves the industries of southern Middletown. It joins the Cincinnati-Columbus trunk line of the Pennsylvania system at the Middletown junction on the Little Miami River.

Main and Tytus Streets furnish a north-south route through the city, that almost parallels Route 75 and Verity Parkway, which was built on the old canal bed. Central Avenue is the main east-west street, following the side of a small valley to ascend the hills of the eastern part of the city. Grand Avenue and Sutphin Street run through the southeastern part of the city to cut into Central Avenue. Breiel Boulevard is planned to connect Oxford State Road to Route 75 in a gigantic, multi-lane cut across eastern Middletown.

The suburbs of east Middletown surround the Grand Avenue-Route 122 Cloverleaf approach to the Great North-South Freeway and Expressway. This highway is the leading route from Cincinnati to Dayton to Columbus and Cleveland. It ties in with the Ohio Turnpike, and the East-West traffic of the nation. State routes 122 and 75 connect Middletown with area communities. State Route 4, gives Middletown other connections with Dayton through Germantown, and south it furnishes a superhighway to neighboring Hamilton.

The downtown business section is located on the lower and upper terrace. The difference in elevation between these two terraces, which are separated by a slope, varies from 10 to 20 feet. These terraces are well-drained and level, furnishing a good site for commercial activities, which can plainly be seen on a ride out Central Avenue. The first terrace starts at Carnody Boulevard, the second at Clark and Curtis, the third at Shafor, and the fourth at Glenmore. The main valley route became the first business center of the town. Then came the development along the chief trans-valley route, which is Central Avenue. Downtown Middletown's business section is from one to two blocks in width. When the tobacco industry located across from the New York Central railroad station, an East End business section developed along Central Avenue. This area had retail shops and coal and lumber yards supplied by direct rail connections. Thus on Central Avenue developed two distinct business sections, now rapidly growing toward each other. When these sections meet, one solid business section will result. As East Middletown developed, the demand came for a new Shopping Center. This was constructed at Breiel and Grand in 1958, with an addition the following year.

It was near Breiel Boulevard that another important Middletown landmark made its appearance in September 1947. Radio Station WPFB, with its 1,000 watt transmitter went on the air serving a population group of 2,000,000 people. Its blinking red lights on top the antennae added another dramatic dash to the Middletown skyline. In July 1959 a large F.M. transmitter, 30,000 KW, went into operation at the same site serving all Southwest Ohio. Call letters of the station stand for its owner, Paul F. Braden. In addition to the services of this fine local station, Middletown receives clear, uninterrupted television signals from 5 channels.

The climate with a mean annual range of 46 degrees is stimulating and encouraging. The region has an annual rainfall of about 40 inches, fairly evenly distributed throughout the year, which provides an ample and constantly renewed supply of ground water for industrial purposes.

Middletown is essentially a manufacturing city, with more than 30 important industries and many smaller plants which employ almost 90 percent of the wage-earners. This industrial





activity is centered in four major groups: Metals and metal products; paper and allied products; miscellaneous; and service industries.

## METAL AND METAL PRODUCTS

### Armco Steel Corporation

More people are engaged in the making of steel than in any other occupation. Since this is the "Iron Age," steel is of vital importance to our country's economic development. It is the basic metal upon which our modern civilization rests.

Besides the General Office, Armco Steel Corporation has three large plants here, located on level land with excellent rail facilities. The plants are the Middletown Works, formerly called East Works; Fabricating, formerly called Central Works; and the Steel Buildings Plant of Armco Drainage and Metal Products, Inc., located south of town on Trine Street. Heavy industries such as iron and steel must have much land for operations and the industry must expand horizontally, while light industries, such as paper, need less land for they may expand vertically.

The process of manufacture is very complicated, yet even in simple outline it is an interesting one. The blast furnace, which represents the first step in the manufacture of steel, is the meeting place of the raw materials—iron ore, limestone and coke. With blast furnaces at New Miami and Middletown, Armco must depend upon lake and river barges and railroads to deliver these vital raw materials.

Armco's iron ore comes from the Great Lakes region, much of it from the Mesabi Range area in Minnesota. Armco has interests in mines which have large estimated ore reserves. Armco also owns half of the Reserve Mining Company which is developing large reserves of magnetic taconite ore on the east end of the Mesabi Range. At Silver Bay and Babbitt, Armco has helped develop facilities for producing taconite. The deposits for use in the future seem almost unlimited. Iron ores in Labrador are also close enough for utilization at Middletown.

When it comes to coal which is used so heavily in the process, Armco's position is strong. Known coal reserves of Armco mines total more than 100,000,000 tons. Armco controls several mines in West Virginia, from which coal is moved to Armco plants down the Ohio River by barge and to the New Miami and Middletown coke ovens by rail.

Limestone is another resource used in making steel. Much of it comes from Piqua and Indiana where it is quarried in large quantities. Dolomite is imported, and scrap iron is obtained wherever it can be purchased most reasonably.

The iron ore (or taconite), coke and limestone are fed to the blast furnace. It is a huge steel tower, lined with clay brick and provided with hot blast stoves. The raw materials are dumped into the top of the furnace, which is heated from a blast at the bottom. As the iron ore, coke and limestone come down into the furnace and are heated, the pure iron is heavier, and accumulates at the bottom of the furnace. The slag floats on top. Each is drawn off separately. Even this waste is valuable. It is used by such organizations as the American Materials Corporation who process it for road building purposes.

When enough iron has accumulated, the furnace is tapped and the molten metal flows out. The intense heat needed for smelting is supplied by the coke which burns in the blast. Generally speaking, to make one ton of pig iron, it takes one ton of coke, 1.9 tons of iron ore, and one-half ton of limestone. Pig iron is very brittle and will crack easily. In steel making it is purified, and alloy metals are added to make the steel elastic and strong. The coke plants are located near the blast furnaces at New Miami and Middletown.

Instead of using molds, as would be expected at New Miami, the molten pig iron is tapped from the blast furnaces there and run directly into huge ladle cars built like thermos bottles. These cars, filled with liquid incandescent iron, go to Middletown 11 miles away, over a railroad especially built to carry this great weight. The metal in these cars is 2850 degrees, and the bottle will keep it hot enough to pour for 18 hours. Thus the iron does not have to be reheated, but can go directly into the open hearth furnaces.

Molten iron, limestone, scrap metal and other raw materials are charged into the open hearth



furnaces to be made into steel. During the time the iron is in the open hearth, usually 10 to 12 hours, the undesirable elements in the iron are burned out. In these furnaces the iron is actually boiled, with temperatures rising to 3,000 degrees. When the laboratory tests show that the furnace is ready to tap, men ram out the big clay plug. The white hot metal runs into a great ladle which carries it away to the mold train, where it is poured or teemed into ingot molds.

After cooling, the molds are stripped from the ingots which are taken to the soaking pits where they are "soaked with heat" until a uniform temperature has been attained. A crane with giant pincers takes them to the slabbing mill, where each ingot is reduced to a big slab about 20 feet long and 5 inches thick, weighing as much as 27,000 pounds. The slab is sheared and reheated and sent to the continuous hot strip mill. The hot slab, 25 feet long, is rolled into a coiled ribbon 750 feet long. After a trip to the pickler for an acid cleansing bath, it goes to the cold reduction mill. After this process some of the coils are unrolled and cut into sheets. Some are shipped to customers in coil form.

In the processing department, these sheets are rolled to the exact gauges desired. From here they go to the galvanizing department, shears, or annealing furnaces, depending on the type of finish desired for future use. The shipping department sends the steel to other companies or other divisions of Armco for further processing into consumer goods.

The rapid growth of the steel industry at Middletown gives evidence of its advantages of location. Although the raw materials are not right at hand, they are not too far away, and Middletown is at a point where the coal and iron ore can meet. Water transportation on the Ohio can be used as a cheap supplement to rail transportation.

The closeness to markets is one great advantage. The Miami Valley and the surrounding territory is a rich section which requires much steel for manufacturing. With the development of the upper south, this demand continues to increase.

Level land for plant development is available. Much land is being held in reserve, and other areas which are close are being developed for industrial purposes, such as the new industrial park site near Monroe. Iron and steel plants require much land for their regular operation, for storage of coal, coke, iron ore, limestone, scrap steel and railroad lines.

Once a large industry is located it tends to stay fixed due to large investments in plant and equipment. This is particularly true of a steel mill. Armco is continually adding to its fixed investment in this city. In 1959 it completed a three-year, \$50 million dollar expansion program.

Armco has gained an advantage over its competitors for it has gone into the manufacture of special grades of iron and steel to meet special industrial needs. Through well-planned advertising campaigns, the company has created a world-wide demand for its products. An Armco galvanized roof or culvert is highly prized as far off as the Philippines.

Armco has access to a good supply of skilled, native labor at Middletown. Through a liberal and fair labor policy, the company has never had a labor dispute in which any work hours were lost. It is known as a pioneer in the field of labor management and cooperation. Through the years Armco spirit has developed in the organization and has been reflected throughout the town.

Another reason for Armco's success has been the emphasis which the company has put on research. Research work began in 1903 when Verity and his associates, with every pile of raw materials in the plant mortgaged, decided to go into quality steel production. Since that time, the company has pioneered in the development of special grades of steel, and now has one of the most productive steel research laboratories in the United States. Armco has developed many labor saving devices. It was Armco's John B. Tytus who planned, designed and set into operation the world's first continuous process steel mill. This is rated as one of the world's ten great industrial inventions, and gave Armco control of many patents.

After World War II, Armco again entered the competitive phase of the steel market. Through diversification and specialization of product, the company had an assured demand regardless of economic conditions. Armco has on its drawing boards now plans for growth in the Middletown area. In a little booklet the Armco organization puts it this way:

"Despite atomic bombs and the fears for civilization's future, Armco will continue to build and plan for tomorrow, pinning its faith on men, engineering and research to make even better products of iron and steel."

It is a very common mistake to suppose that the only way to get a good education is to go to a good school. In fact, the best education is often the one that is given at home. A child who is taught by his parents is more likely to be interested in his studies and to learn more than a child who is taught in a school. This is because the parents know their child's strengths and weaknesses and can tailor their instruction to his needs. They can also provide a more liberal and interesting education than a school can.

There are many reasons why a child should be educated at home. One of the most important is that the child can learn at his own pace. He is not forced to go to school every day, and he can take as much time as he needs to learn each subject. This is especially true for children who are very bright or who have special interests. They can spend more time on their favorite subjects and less time on the ones they find boring.

Another reason why a child should be educated at home is that he can learn from his parents. Parents are often the best teachers for their children. They know their child's personality and can teach him in a way that is most effective. They can also provide a more liberal and interesting education than a school can. For example, they can take their child to museums, libraries, and other places of interest. They can also teach him about the world and about himself in a way that a school cannot.

There are many other reasons why a child should be educated at home. For example, he can learn to be a responsible citizen. He can learn to respect his parents and his neighbors. He can learn to be a good friend and a good citizen. These are all things that a school cannot teach him as well as his parents can.

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Practically all raw material used by the Armco Drainage & Metal Products, Inc., a subsidiary of Armco Steel, is secured from the parent company. AD&MP buys sheet steel for the manufacture of steel drainage products and buildings. Middletown is the headquarters for this nationwide operation, which also distributes the products of the Middletown Fabricating Plant. A new AD&MP General Office was constructed on the old Young Street school property in 1950.

AD&MP divisions are located so as to serve every state. Each division has its own manager, office force and salesmen. Within each division there is at least one manufacturing plant, and some have several. These 55 manufacturing units are located in the U.S. and Canada so that the cost of transportation may be kept at a minimum. It takes much less space to ship the sheet steel than the finished product. Products manufactured include: galvanized, corrugated metal pipe of all varieties and coverings, spiral welded pipe, multi-plate pipe, part circle culverts, retaining walls and many other specialty type steel products.

The AD&MP Trine Street plant manufactures steel buildings of all types, particularly for farm, school and industrial use. Various types of steel panels are also fabricated.

Another important Armco subsidiary in Middletown is Armco International Corporation. Primarily a sales organization with offices and warehouses in most major free world cities, its staff is headquartered in the company's General Office on Curtis St.

Armco International has a number of technical aid agreements with steel companies in friendly countries abroad. Because of these agreements, Middletonians often see people from Europe, South Africa, Latin America and Asia shopping in our stores or walking down the street. This is rather unusual for a small mid-western city like ours and gives our people a chance to get to know personally our neighbors in other lands.

Armco Steel Corporation is much larger than most persons realize. Although it produces only about five percent of the nation's steel, the company is one of the thirtieth largest corporations in the United States. It has steel producing plants in Baltimore, Md.; Butler, Pa.; Zanesville, O.; Ashland, Ky.; Kansas City, Mo.; Sand Springs, Okla.; Houston, Tex.; and Torrance, Calif.

The company has a number of small subsidiaries, but its largest is The National Supply Company. Acquired in 1958, it has 8,000 employees. National Supply is the world's largest manufacturer and distributor of oil field machinery and equipment. Its headquarters are in Pittsburgh, Pa.

### Aeronca Manufacturing Corporation

Aeronca today is a pioneer and leader in the fabrication of high-temperature air vehicle structures. It has achieved a high position in the aircraft industry of which it is justly proud.

In June 1940, the Aeronautical Corporation of America began production of the light-weight Aeronca plane at its new factory in Middletown on Germantown Road. The plant, using 60,000 square feet of floor space and a large steel hangar, was designed to produce 200 planes a month. The company sold its planes, the "Chum," "Champion" and "Chief," to flying schools, flying clubs, governments of many nations, as well as to individuals. With 40 to 65 horsepower motors they made fine training planes. It was the first company to market a truly light plane.

The company had begun its life at Lunken Airport, Cincinnati in 1928, when a group of Cincinnati businessmen formed this pioneer light plane industry. Their first plane weighed 675 pounds, delivered 23 horsepower, and produced a maximum speed of 75 miles an hour. Located along the Ohio River, the plant suffered a great loss in the 1937 flood and the company decided to move to Middletown. Here a plot of cheap, level land was available for plant expansion, with a municipal airport close by for test flights. A service facility, now called the Queen City Flying Service, then Wedekind-Schmidlapp, was next door.

This airport made the site an ideal one. While Hook Municipal Field has no regular commercial airline service, air taxi and helicopter service can be secured to reach Cincinnati and Dayton Airports. From these airports both passenger and air freight lines are available to all parts of the world. There are three runways at the local airport, one 5,000 feet long, and a lighted runway 4,600 feet long.

Before World War II there were over 1,000 Aeronca dealers in the United States. Farmers



and ranchers in the West demanded a light-weight plane, and the Aeronca "Chief" became a favorite.

World War II found Aeronca converted exclusively to defense production. Its training planes, gliders and other aircraft equipment told the story. Quality, low-cost, and on-time delivery schedules brought two Army and Navy "E's" for excellence to the local company. For Korea, Aeronca produced the Army L-16, the bazooka and other essential defense hardware.

After the spurt of production for the government during World War II, Aeronca faced problems of readjustment to a peace-time economy. Too many aircraft companies turned to small plane production in a shrinking post-war market. The anticipated demands for small planes just did not materialize. During this period, John Lawler accepted the presidency of the struggling organization. Through his leadership and vision, plus hard work, the company was put on its feet, and the sales curve began to rise.

Aeronca's position in the field was strengthened with the establishment of the Aeronca-California Division formed as a result of a merger of two companies and the newly merged Longren Aircraft Inc., of Torrance, California. This division is engaged in the production of fuel wing tanks and pylons for the Boeing B-52-G "Missile Platform" jet bomber and major assemblies for other West Coast Aircraft and missile producers. The Electronics Division at Baltimore, Maryland is now concentrating on the development of electronic devices and equipment including a complete line of digital data systems, which are used in the missile and high speed aircraft fields.

At its home plant in Middletown, many changes have recently taken place. High cost and dispersed facilities were closed. All manufacture of aircraft and missile assemblies are now conducted in the main plant located on Germantown Road. However, a two-story factory type facility on Lamneck Street has been leased to provide space for storage and warehousing activities for the new Metal Products Division of Aeronca, which was organized to undertake the manufacture and distribution of stainless steel sinks.

The summer of 1959 saw the completion of a new 65,000 square feet structure at the main plant site to provide the space needed for the manufacture of brazed stainless steel honeycomb and for other new and advanced types of assemblies for the advanced generation of aircraft and missiles. Here are housed the modern furnaces and related equipment devoted solely to the manufacture of stainless steel honeycomb assemblies.

Aeronca assists in the manufacture of some of the world's most advanced aircraft. The company produces major assemblies for Boeing's B-52-G "Missile Platform" bomber, which is the strong right arm of the Strategic Air Command, and is the fastest and most deadly heavy bomber at this time. The company produces the "wing center section" for Boeing's stratojet tanker, and for Boeing's new 707 Stratoliner jet airliner, now in trans-Atlantic service. For the new and more sophisticated combat aircraft now being produced for the United States Air Forces, Aeronca is among the leading subcontractors.

In late 1958, Aeronca took another major step forward with the delivery of a prototype "training target missile" to the Army Rocket and Guided Missile Agency at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama, as part of a competitive proposal. Aeronca received a contract from the White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, for the manufacture of the new Pogo-Hi Target missile for the U. S. Army. This prime contract marks Aeronca's entry into the missile field as a prime competitor.

All these steps, all these actions, have heralded the arrival of Aeronca Manufacturing Corporation as a new and vital entity both in the aircraft industry and in Middletown. Aeronca, the second largest employer in Middletown, has contributed materially to the strength and vitality of the community.

### United Welding

"Tailoring in Metal" is how the United Welding Corporation, located in south Middletown, describes its specialized work. Back in 1913 the Company was formed with this objective in mind; to shear, form, weld and test straight seam welded pipe. This pipe was then asphalt coated and used primarily for water systems.

When Armco introduced a new and cheaper method of producing spiral welded pipe,





United Welding turned to other specialized fields of production. The straight-seam process was continued in use for heavier gauges, and is still used for some work. The Company does many types of fabricating work and welding of machine tool parts.

From a small plant in 1913, United Welding has enlarged its facilities. Today it uses 62,000 square feet of space for production. Skilled welders, machinists, along with the aid of an engineering and office staff make up the United Welding team.

The United Welding Company was incorporated February 14, 1927 for the purpose of fabricating welded steel pipe, fabricated furnace parts, stacks, breechings, tanks and other small miscellaneous fabricated items. Approximately 90% of the sales from the date of incorporation until the start of the year 1934 consisted of pipe and furnace parts.

In 1934, the General Machinery Corporation acquired control and the company was re-organized at that time. During 1936, United Welding started the fabrication of diesel engine parts which require top level skills in pre-machining, welding etc., and are fabricated to extremely close tolerances. Today, this represents a large part of its volume. In 1946, the large press manufacturers started using weldments instead of castings at a very accelerated pace.

Following the acquisition of all of the stock by General Machinery Corporation, United Welding became progressively part of the Hamilton Division of Lima-Hamilton Corporation—and today, this is Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton Corporation.

### **Mokry-Tesmer, Inc.**

Mokry-Tesmer, Inc., designs and builds paper machinery and equipment with precision and skill. The company is also noted for the manufacturing of all types of special machinery, serving both the paper and steel industries, locally and throughout the nation. Since 1949 the company has been under the joint control of Shenango Furnace Company of Pittsburgh, and Aco Machinery, Watertown, N. Y. In the last ten years, under the leadership of Paul Howard, the plant has been completely remodeled and re-tooled with the latest equipment to do precision work.

The company had its beginning back in 1919. With the automobile becoming popular in the city, August Mokry started a small repair shop. In 1920 he was joined in the enterprise by William Tesmer, who was skilled in machinery repair work. The two men formed a partnership, which was incorporated in 1937.

### **Shartle Division: The Black-Clawson Company**

Shartle, the largest firm of its kind in Middletown, is a part of the world wide Black-Clawson Company and one of five divisions in this country serving the Pulp and Paper Industry.

A machine-using region tends to become a machine-making region. This geographic principle is well demonstrated in the case of Shartle, which is in the center of the Miami Valley paper industry. The same applies to the other divisions of Black-Clawson; which are also located in the hubs of important paper making centers.

It all started in 1900 when Charles W. Shartle opened a small machine shop for repair work on machinery and equipment of local paper mills. Since he was not satisfied that his business could prosper on repair work only, he decided to enter into manufacturing of new and improved designs of paper making equipment. Many of these original machines are still in use today, and many of them have led to machinery developments which have helped to revolutionize the American paper industry.

Shartle was incorporated in 1912, and in 1926 became a division of The Black-Clawson Company, which is today recognized as the world's largest manufacturer of pulp and paper mill machinery.

Many different types of paper machinery are manufactured at the Middletown and Hamilton plants of the Shartle Division. This machinery is the stock preparatory equipment needed to make ready the paper stock for the paper machine. The major items are the Hydrapulpers, Jordans, Selectifier Screens, Pumps, Refiners and Valves.

Castings for much of this equipment are provided by Keuthan Foundry here in Middletown which is also a member of the giant Black-Clawson family.

Shartles has continued to increase its investment in Middletown. In 1957 a large addition to the office building was completed. Plant facilities have been enlarged and modernized. From



a small repair shop to a part of the great Black-Clawson organization is the brief story of Shartles — all accomplished in the twentieth century.

### **Manchester Machine Company**

The Manchester Machine Company, a subsidiary of Diamond National Corporation, is the country's fastest growing manufacturer of papermaking machinery. In August, 1959, the company moved into a modern and spacious \$1,470,000 plant on U. S. Route 25 near Monroe.

With a growing list of more than 200 customers throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Latin America, the company has shown remarkable progress since its humble beginning 10 years ago.

Manchester was founded in 1949 when the Bevis Machine Co. on West Central Ave. was purchased by Gardner. At that time the firm was mainly a "job shop," doing repair work almost exclusively, and having a payroll of 20 employees. Manchester's growth can best be illustrated by the fact that the company now employs 140 people—an increase of 700%.

The only new entrant in the field of manufacturing complete papermaking machines in the past 50 years, Manchester looks forward to a bright future of higher sales and employment. Its new plant provides: (a.) Facilities for upwards of 500 employees, (b.) Three times the production capacity of the old building on W. Central, (c.) Better facilities to manufacture, erect, and assemble larger machinery, (d.) Improved working conditions, (e.) A \$250,000 investment in new equipment, and (f.) A \$200,000 office building.

### **The Barkelew Electric Mfg. Co.**

The Barkelew Electric Mfg. Co. started manufacturing electric switches in a small building on Wall Street in 1900. The company was incorporated in 1904 and moved to a two story building on the corner of Canal and Reynolds Streets. In 1928 it moved to its present location on Columbia Avenue.

The company makes heavy duty industrial types of electric switches that are used by power companies, switchboard builders, and by many kinds of machinery manufacturers.

The switches are either designed by Barkelew engineers or are made to the customer's designs and specifications. Usually models are made and tested before tools and dies for manufacture are made by skilled toolmakers. Equipment used for making the various parts consist of lathes, milling machines, grinders, punch presses, shapers and drill presses. Some automatic machines are used to do a number of operations on a single part.

Raw materials required consist principally of copper bar and strip secured in Detroit or Rome, New York, steel bar and sheet from steel warehouses in Cincinnati and insulating materials such as plastics and asbestos compounds secured mainly in the Eastern United States. Some copper, iron and aluminum castings are purchased from Miami Valley foundries.

The completed parts are then assembled into finished switches which are subjected to a rigid inspection and test to make certain that they are safe and will properly do the job for which they were designed. Shipments are made by air, truck and railroad to all parts of the United States and Canada. Some switches are exported to various countries in South and Central America.

### **Coolidge Corporation**

Coolidge Corporation is a very specialized, yet important, part of the metal products industry. This company, located along the New York Central mainline, produces millions of bearings each year, which helps keep America rolling.

### **Miami Cabinet Division**

#### **The Philip Carey Manufacturing Company**

Miami Cabinet is the successor to the Miami Cycle and Manufacturing Company organized on July 20th in the year 1895 by Paul J. Sorg.

During World War I, all hand grenades used by American Armed Forces were manufactured by the Miami Cycle Company. Regular products of the company were the Racycle, the Hudson Bicycle, the Miami Bicycle, the Flying Merkle Motorcycle and the Musselman Coasterbrake. The Miami Cycle and Manufacturing Company was the largest bicycle manufacturer in America.







When the Manchester Hotel was built, there were no satisfactory steel bathroom cabinets available. The executives of Miami Cycle and Manufacturing Company decided to manufacture a complete line of steel bathroom cabinets.

With the automobile becoming more popular everyday, the bicycle industry almost went out of business completely. The affairs of the Miami Cycle and Manufacturing Company were closed out and on November 17, 1923, the Miami Cabinet Company was organized.

On July 5, 1933, The Philip Carey Manufacturing Company, originated in 1873, purchased the Miami Cabinet Company. It has since been operated as the Miami Cabinet Division of The Philip Carey Manufacturing Company.

In 1944, the parent company purchased the Wardlow-Thomas Company properties at the south end of Vanderveer Street and operated these properties as a Felt Mill, subsequently these buildings were sold. In 1952, the company purchased the Ventilator Fan Division of Victor Electric Products, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio. All equipment was moved to the Middletown Plant where manufacturing operations commenced immediately.

From a small beginning, Miami Cabinet has expanded until it is the largest producer of bathroom medicine cabinets in the world. The product line today is extensive — bathroom medicine cabinets, a complete line of framed mirrors, electric door chimes, ventilating fans, range hoods, access doors, bathroom heaters and bathroom accessories. These products are shipped from Middletown to all parts of the world.

### THE PAPER INDUSTRY

Paper and allied products make up the second industrial cluster of Middletown industries. This group ranks second to metal and metal products, and the paper industry taken as a whole, is the second largest employer in the city. In 1960 there were 12 companies making some kind of paper product, ranging from thin tissues to heavy box board. In addition there were two large companies specializing in the manufacture of paper machinery, plus machine shops and foundries serving the paper industry.

Throughout the Miami Valley, and at Middletown in particular, there has been a localization of the paper industry. This is due to certain geographic factors. Water is the most important natural resource of the valley, and clear, filtered water is an asset in paper making. Middletown had the advantage of an early start, with the first mill going into production in 1852. The hydraulic canal, not only furnished necessary cheap water power, but doubled as a transportation artery. Skilled labor, with a paper-making tradition behind it, is another important factor.

Other factors which have made possible the growth of the local paper industry are: (1) Middletown is near the center of manufacturing in the U. S. and near large industrial and retail markets; (2) Paper mills have a product with high value added through manufacture lessening the importance of transportation costs; (3) Local companies have built up their own markets and do not compete too much with the Eastern ones; (4) Raw materials can easily be obtained.

Raw materials needed vary from industry to industry. Every mill uses some pulp, which comes to Middletown by rail and water from the Pacific Northwest, Southern U. S., Canada, Northwest Europe. Paper board manufacturers use waste paper, which is obtained from cities and trimmings from paper mills.

The paper mills of the Miami Valley have organized the Miami Valley Shipper's Association which provides economy in transportation, for carload shipments can be made up from several companies resulting in lower freight rates.

In Middletown there are five paper mills: Sorg Paper Company, Wrenn (Mead) Paper, Harding-Jones, Crystal Tissue, and Continental Can. There are two waxing companies: Crystal Waxing, Pollock Paper Corporation. Paper sacks are made at Raymond Bag. The four box board companies are: Diamond-National, Fairbanks Containers, Inland Container, and Interstate. Each of these plants manufactures its own special products, which are described later in this section.

### Sorg Paper Company

The oldest and one of the largest of Middletown's paper companies is Sorg, which started



in 1852, as the Erwin Paper Company with a capacity of 5 tons a day. The ancestors of this historic company include: Erwin Brothers (1852); Oglesby, Barnitz, Tytus, Erwin and Company (1854); Oglesby, Moore and Company (1865); Hill and Peck Paper Mill (1866); Middletown Paper Company (1881); W. B. Oglesby Paper Company (1887); Jacoby Paper Company (1893); Paul A. Sorg Paper Company (1899); and the Frank Smith Paper Company (1923). In 1931 the W. B. Oglesby Paper Company, The Frank Smith Paper Company, the Paul A. Sorg Paper Company and the Paul A. Sorg Realty Company were dissolved and merged as the Sorg Paper Company.

Sorg Paper thus represents nine former paper mills which did business at this site. Sorg produces a great variety of papers; in fact it is said that Sorg specializes in specialties. In 1936 they added to their line by acquiring the blotting paper business of the Wrenn Paper Company, and now supply the former Wrenn customers with the same high grade product. Some of the other papers produced by Sorg include mimeograph, post card, Kraft specialties, direct process, flame resistant papers, register bond. This great variety of Sorg papers calls for many different kinds of pulp. Some are made from rag pulp, which is very expensive and used only in special grades. Some papers are made using a combination of rag and wood pulp. Wood pulp is largely used.

Since World War II, Sorg has modernized its plant. Stock preparation equipment has been replaced with modern hydropulpers and refiners. In 1945 a converting department was built as a result of the developing relationship between the fast-growing plastic industry and paper. Sorg's converting department applies synthetic plastic to paper, using a coating machine. Also put in operation to better serve its customers was an Aniline press, a rotogravure press, and a tissue folding machine where Kay-Pees are converted into industrial towels. In 1957 came an expanded power plant and then a new turbine. This new power plant gave Sorg much needed power to enable stepped up production on its six paper machines. In 1954 the stock treatment equipment on Machine 5 at the Oglesby mill was completely modernized.

Sorg is keeping pace with the paper industry as it goes into its second one hundred years. With approximately 600 employees, production is 125 tons a day.

### The Harding-Jones Paper Company

The Harding-Jones Paper Company has been manufacturing fine bond and ledger papers since 1865. Their fine quality cotton content papers are widely known for their excellence and ability to withstand the ravages of time. The first officers of this company were A. E. Harding, William Oglesby, J. V. Sinkey, and C. F. Gunckel. Under their management two mills were organized, one in Excello and the other at Franklin. The Franklin division burned in 1879 but was rebuilt. In 1898, shortly after the death of Harding, both mills were sold to the American Writing Paper Company. They were, however, managed by Harding's son-in-law, Thomas A. Jones during that period. In 1925, he repurchased both mills, selling the Franklin mill to Maxwell Howard, who then operated it as the Maxwell Paper Company. Jones reorganized the Excello mill as the Harding-Jones Paper Company.

Harding-Jones differs from most paper manufacturers in that cotton fiber is to a large extent used as a raw material. They manufacture their cotton fiber pulp from new rag cuttings which are purchased from textile mills and garment factories. Most of their product contains this cotton fiber in varying percentages, depending upon the quality of the paper being manufactured. That portion of the paper which is not cotton fiber is manufactured from bleached wood pulp which comes from the great pulp producing areas of the South and the Pacific North-West.

The rag cuttings are cooked in a rotary digester for several hours which process extracts any coloring matter and impurities which might be in the cuttings. After cooking, the rag stock is washed thoroughly with pure water of drinking quality. It is bleached to a snowy white and again washed to remove all traces of the Bleaching liquor. This purified cotton pulp is mixed with whatever wood pulp might be used. Sizing materials and color are added and the mass of fibers in a liquid state are then flown onto the wire mesh screen of the paper machine. Here, the water drains away leaving a felted layer of fiber which is now actually wet paper although it still contains about 70% water.

While in this wet, plastic state the watermark is imparted to the paper by means of a

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dandy roll. Watermarking is an extremely important operation at Harding-Jones where literally hundreds of different watermarks are used depending upon the desires of the customer. It is in this field of watermarking that Harding-Jones excels and this is another phase of paper-making in which it differs from most mills. Watermarks date back to the earliest days of hand-made paper and have been variously used to identify the manufacturer, to prevent counterfeiting of currency and important documents, and to permit the paper user to identify himself with his own name or trademark permanently built into the paper he uses.

After watermarking, the paper passes on a felt blanket through several large ringers or presses which press out a considerable quantity of the remaining water. Following this pressing it is passed over numerous steam filled cylinders which dry out the remaining moisture.

Following the drying operation, great rolls of paper are then unwound through a bath of glue or starch size. This is done to give the surface a hard finish and make the paper resistant to ink. Following the sizing operation, the Harding-Jones Company, for many years, cut the paper into sheets and hung it on poles in the drying room to dry out the size. This process has been replaced in recent years by a continuous "air dryer" which passes the paper over hot air jets drying it to the proper moisture content, thus completing the manufacturing process.

Located as it is in the heart of an excellent market with an abundant supply of pure water, Harding-Jones has disproved the predictions of eastern manufacturers that fine papers could never be manufactured in the middle-west. This company has maintained a tradition for making fine papers for almost 100 years. Its recently remodeled plant, retaining its classic 19th century architecture, is one of the most beautiful in Ohio and this historic landmark continues as a modern, efficient unit of the paper making industry.

### Wrenn Paper Company



The Wrenn Paper Company in 1958 celebrated the 100th anniversary of its founding. It was then known as Sutphin and Wrenn—manufacturers of newsprint.

Old records indicate that the entire daily production at the mill was floated down the Canal to Cincinnati where it was sold to the newspaper publishers.

Gradually Wrenn began making other papers in the absorbent line. Blotting paper became the main product and eventually was known to the domestic and foreign markets all over the world by its trade mark, a symbol of quality. The blotting paper business flourished and Wrenn held the position of leader in the field for many years.

Shortly after World War II, the chemists at Wrenn began searching for new products. A new industry had sprung up using an absorbent type paper called saturating or impregnating paper, and to this new industry, Wrenn helped pioneer and develop the highly specialized papers that go into the manufacture of laminated plastics.

Again, this new type of business flourished as the plastics industry grew, and soon less and less blotting paper was being made. Finally, in 1956 Wrenn sold all of the blotting paper business to a neighboring mill to devote its entire production capacity to the manufacture of papers going into the laminated plastics industry.

In 1958 The Wrenn Paper Company became a wholly owned subsidiary of The Mead Corporation, Chillicothe, Ohio. Wrenn has maintained its quality products and is among the leaders in the industry.

### Continental Can Company

The local plant of Continental Can Company is listed as Plant 511, Boxboard and Folding Carton Division, Middletown. The Wardlow-Thomas paper mill, a landmark of early years, started along the Miami-Erie canal lock at this point. This mill made specialty paper for over 75 years, which consisted of tough cartridge paper and flour sack paper.

In 1941 Wardlow-Thomas was sold to the Philip Carey Corporation, only to be held by them for one year and then sold to Prairie States, which revamped the entire mill to run test

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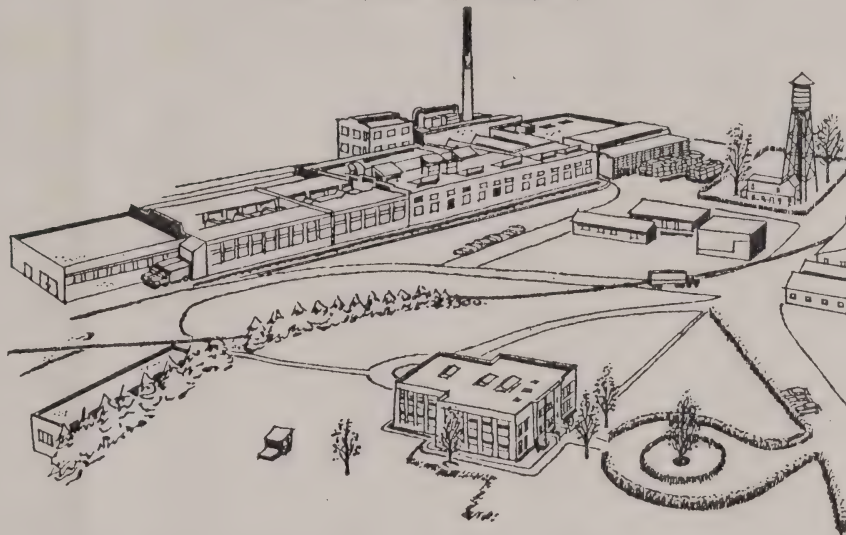
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liner and plain paper. In 1945 Owens-Illinois bought in with Prairie, and eventually took over the entire operation in 1948. At that time the name was changed to American Coating Mills, and they again revamped the plant with a new turbine, new boiler, line shafts, cutter, rewinder etc. In 1951 the Robert Gair Company bought out all American Coating Mills of which Middletown was one. Continental Can merged with the Gair Company in 1956. Continental's products cover every aspect of the packaging industry, utilizing the facilities of 140 plants.

### Crystal Tissue Company Crystal Waxing Company



The famed historic Amanda, located in the South Middletown area, is an old community with a long history in industrial development. Here is located the neat, sprawling mill of The Crystal Tissue Company and The Crystal Waxing Company.

Five years before the founding of Middletown, a man by the name of Adam Dickey set up the trading post of Amanda, a thriving port of call for bargemen and traders. In 1827 the very enterprising Adam started a saw mill and in later years, a flour mill, brick kiln, distillery, and in 1886, converted his flour mill to a strawboard mill. This was the beginning of paper manufacturing at this site. A short time later, the mill burned down but was rebuilt in 1888.

In 1894, J. W. Van Dyke gained control of the company and named it The Crystal Paper Company. This company had its own waxing department and first supplied the National Biscuit Company with waxed papers for boxed crackers and gained the undisputed honor of being instrumental in "taking crackers out of the barrel."

D. E. Harlan assumed the responsibility for company management in 1897. He was an engineer and an experienced man in management and for the next 23 years made many changes and additions that laid the foundation for Crystal progress.

In 1920, Harlan retired and Z. W. Ranck took over the company. Under the new management, the mill's name was changed to the Crystal Tissue Company and at that time the yearly production was between six and eight million pounds compared to a yearly production now of over 25 million pounds.

In 1939, upon the death of Ranck, E. E. Grant became President. Through the years Crystal has continued to make steady progress and is now the largest specialty tissue manufacturer in the United States.

At present the company has four paper machines in operation: one cylinder and three Fourdriniers with one Fourdrinier being a "Yankee." Three of the machines will produce a sheet of paper 120" wide and one produces a 100" sheet.





Crystal has been among the leaders in developing many papers. In 1912 Crystal developed cylinder twisting tissue for use in making the colorful fibre rugs and mats that were so popular in the homes of early Americans. In 1935 Crystal was the major supplier of twisting tissues to the converters that made automobile seat covers and in 1946, developed the first "fast to light" twisting tissue for automobile seat covers. Crystal tissues have also contributed greatly to the betterment of consumer and industrial goods packaging.

In 1923 Crystal purchased the Shelby Waxed Paper Company of Shelby, Ohio. A year later the captive plant was moved to Middletown where it became known as the Crystal Waxing Company, a subsidiary of the Crystal Tissue Company. Stanley H. Reed is President, succeeding L. J. Long in 1951. Crystal waxed tissue items, such as florist sheet and roll tissues, bakery and food handling tissues, waxed excelsior "Easter Grass," delicatessen papers and other waxed specialties are processed and packaged by the Crystal Waxing Company.

The name of the Crystal Tissue Company has long been a mark of quality in the tissue field. Only the finest foreign and domestic wood pulps and other raw materials are used by Crystal. No other tissue mill is more flexible or markets a wider variety of wrapping, industrial and specialty tissues.

### Pollock Paper Company

One of the leading companies in the flexible packaging field has been located in Middletown since 1946. Pollock Paper Company, a division of St. Regis Paper Company, specializes in the manufacture of "End Labels" for use with waxed paper in wrapping loaves of bread. They also produce millions of "Top Labels" which are used by the Bakery Industry on all types of cakes, rolls, buns, etc.

At its Middletown plant, which is just one of the many plants located throughout the country, "Waxed Bread Wrappers" are also produced. Another major product of this paper company is the production of "waxed wrappers" for the Frozen Food Industry. Distribution of its many products is on a national scale with full utilization of trucks and railroads to insure a steady and continuous supply of paper products for its many customers.

### The Raymond Bag Corporation



If you have anything you want to put in a bag, The Raymond Bag Corporation will make a bag according to specifications. The corporation manufactures heavy duty bags for distribution of food, agricultural and industrial products.

The story of Raymond Bag goes back to two brothers of the Raymond family, who in the year 1868 in the city of Cincinnati began a paper and cotton bag manufacturing plant under their family name. But the brothers couldn't agree, and one started another plant. Then followed a price war, during which time they went broke, and the Taggart brothers took over what was left of the Raymond Brothers Bag Company in payment of a bill. In 1910 Taggart's sold the company to a Middletown firm, which moved the Raymond Bag to Middletown in July of that year. In 1916 it moved from its original location in Middletown on Reynolds Street to Girard Avenue, and in 1931 it moved to its present location. In 1953 Raymond became a division of the Albemarle Paper Mfg. Company of Richmond, Virginia. The Middletown location is now the bag division headquarters, as Raymond operates another bag plant in Richmond, Virginia.

It takes a lot of machines to make the simple paper bag, which after all isn't so simple. Six bottomer machines put bottoms in the bags. Then there are six presses, nine tubers, and



seventeen sewing machines. The work of making a bag is pretty much down to a science at Raymond.

A bag just isn't a bag either! There are different kinds of bags—varying in size and weight. A bag may be constructed of one sheet of various papers, usually Kraft, or it may be made of several sheets of varying weights. Sacks are manufactured with moisture-resisting sheets of papers—either asphalt lamination coated paper or waxed kraft. Then there is Clupak the paper that stretches. The sack may also be lined with a polyethylene material.

The different types of sacks are the pasted open mouth, the pasted valve, the sewed open mouth and the sewed valve. The words pasted and sewed designate the type of bag, while the open mouth or valve designate the kind of opening in the top.

This manufacturing of paper bags sounds like a big thing — and it is just that. In fact, it should be noted that the Middletown plant of the Raymond Bag Corporation is one of the largest single plants, manufacturing paper bags and sacks, under one roof in the Industry.

### **The Gardner Division—Diamond National Corporation**

The bright attractive packages, in which most of us buy our daily needs, are often the product of a local company, The Gardner Division of Diamond National Corporation. This company produces paperboard packages by the billions for hundreds of nationally-known products. It is one of the largest manufacturers of paperboard and folding cartons in the world.

Beginning as the Colin Gardner Paper Co. in 1900, with one paperboard machine (which produced 30 tons a day), the company experienced rapid growth. One of the reasons was the company's development of a superior white-lined paperboard, named "Patent Coated," which met with immediate favor and is still a leading grade in the industry.

Within eight years the company began construction of a second mill known as The Gardner-Harvey Paper Co. The new mill brought the combined daily capacity of both board mills up to 130 tons.

In the early 1920's many paperboard mills were diversifying their companies by entering the folding carton business. Gardner achieved this in 1923 by buying the folding carton machinery of The Universal Paper Products Co. of Clyde, O. These facilities were moved to a new building in Middletown which is still in use as the present carton plant. The company became officially known as the Gardner & Harvey Co. in 1924.

In 1932 the company purchased the paperboard and carton plants of The Richardson Co. at Lockland, O., a suburb of Cincinnati, 25 miles from Middletown. The name, The Gardner & Harvey Co., was then changed to The Gardner-Richardson Co. In 1946 the name was changed to the Gardner Board and Carton Co.

Once considered an art, papermaking is now a complex technology. The raw materials used to produce paperboard are waste paper, wood pulp and water. It takes about 8,000 gallons of water, 1,600 pounds of waste paper, and 400 pounds of wood pulp to make a ton of paperboard. In brief, this is how paperboard is made: Pulp and waste paper are mixed with water and chemicals, and then refined. The pulp and waste paper fibers are formed into a sheet by straining them from the water. Next, the sheet is pressed, dried, and ironed smooth.

Gardner paperboard is called a "filled sheet" because it is made of several layers of different composition. Each layer is treated or made according to the use for which the paperboard is intended.

Gardner now has five paperboard machines (three in Lockland and two in Middletown) with a combined daily capacity of 500 tons, or about 20 freight carloads. All told, the Company makes some 2,000 different grades of paperboard.

In 1957 Gardner Board and Carton Co. merged with the Diamond Match Co. of New York to form Diamond Gardner Corporation. In 1959 the directors of Diamond Gardner Corporation and The United States Printing & Lithograph Co. agreed in principle to merge the two companies, to form the Diamond National Corporation.

Although still a leading producer of paperboard, The Gardner Division today is essentially in the packaging business. Printing presses and other equipment convert the paperboard into folding carton packages for some of America's most famous products. These include packages for soaps and detergents, cereals, cake mixes, hardware, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, grass seed, toys, milk, butter, ice cream, soft drinks and beverages, wearing apparel.





Gardner pioneered the manufacture of paraffin milk cartons in 1935, the first ones being produced in Middletown. The company was also probably the first to make soft-drink carrier cartons, and these were made in Lockland in the 1930's.

To produce its folding cartons, The Gardner Division uses the three major printing processes—letterpress, offset lithography, and rotogravure. The design and manufacture of these paperboard packages consistently win national awards.

It is estimated that the average American family uses about 2,000 paperboard packages a year. Though we constantly rely on these cartons for their ease of handling, time-saving features and protection, we seldom give a second thought to these advantages. In olden days, people bought cookies and crackers from the open bins at the store. And if they wanted vinegar or molasses, they took a jar which the grocer filled from a keg. Other foods were stored in unprotected barrels, tubs and sacks.

Today packaging affords the customer inexpensive certainty of cleanliness, accurate measure, identification of brand and contents, and uniform quality. The Gardner Division's annual production of paperboard packages—which runs into the billions—would reach to the moon and back.

In Middletown, The Gardner Division now has two paperboard mills, a carton plant and divisional offices. At Lockland are a paperboard mill, carton plant, retail box plant, and rotogravure building. These operations employ more than 2,000 people—about half in Middletown and half in Lockland.

### Inland Container Corporation

In many amphibious invasions during the World War II, large ships could not get to a dock to unload. Often there was not time to unload at a dock, or perhaps the danger from enemy attack was too great. Large weather-proof boxes were thrown into the sea, and left to drift to the beach, where they were picked up by the soldiers for use. The Inland Container Corporation's plant at Middletown, Ohio, manufactured millions of these boxes.

This Inland plant makes more than 350,000 corrugated boxes a day, of all grades and specifications, which are used to package more than 10 million pounds of merchandise of all kinds. In cubicle volume, Inland Container is Middletown's third largest shipper. The Inland trademark on millions of containers carries the name of Middletown to every country in the world. The Corporation has seventeen large plants, and is the second largest corrugated box company in the world.

The corrugated board industry is a fairly recent development in the paper business. It was not until 1910 that volume production was achieved; however, before this time some single faced corrugated board was made and used for interior packaging to cushion such merchandise as glass. In Middletown, the industry got its start in 1928, when Gardner-Harvey Container Corporation, a subsidiary of the Gardner-Harvey Paper Company, was established. A plant was built, but the following year, Inland took it over and has operated it ever since.

The crimped paper which served as a protection of lamp chimneys which Grandfather bought at the country store, is the ancestor of the tough, corrugated box board of today. An enterprising glass packer, tired of sawdust and wood boxes, started using crimped paper, but then he found that this was not strong enough, so he glued a smooth piece of cardboard to the crimped paper and added strength. The next step in the industry was to add another facing and use a stronger crimped paper. Thus the modern corrugated board came into being. Today corrugated fiberboard is used to protect every conceivable product during shipment, including major appliances weighing hundreds of pounds.

### Fairbanks Containers, Inc.

The Fairbanks Containers, Inc., now one of the most modern plants in the city, started along the old hydraulic canal near Central Avenue. The Grant Fairbanks Company dates to 1909 and was originally owned by C. B. Oglesby. In 1912 it was purchased by a group of investors who formed the Fairbanks Fiber Box Company, as it was known until purchased by the Ohio Boxboard Company in 1935. The company moved to its present location in 1919, with additions being made in 1922 and 1947.



Fairbanks Containers makes corrugated products. Boxes to ship all kinds of items are made, and the company will provide anything manufactured with a suitable and safe container.

In 1959 Fairbanks became a Division of the Packaging Corporation of America. The consolidation brings together facilities producing jute and kraft linerboard, boxboard, bleached kraft, corrugating medium, molded pulp products, egg packaging products, shipping containers and folding cartons, and other paperboard products. The local plant has been given greater integration and a wider market area. The parent company has plants at 42 locations.

### Interstate Folding Box Company

Interstate today, the converting plant at Middletown, along with the paperboard mill at Miamisburg, is indeed a far cry from the small wooden building in which a dozen employees began making paper boxes in 1911. Founded in that year by Samuel Bergstein the company began in a small frame building on Charles Street, and despite early setbacks caused by fire and flood, continued to grow.

The present site on Verity Parkway, acquired in 1918, has been expanded several times. The steady growth of the company was largely due to the exclusive nature of the items manufactured, conceived primarily through the inventive genius of the founder and consistently developed through the medium of continuing research under the direction of Robert and Frank Bergstein, sons of the founder.

In 1948 the firm announced the opening of its own boxboard mill at Miamisburg, Ohio to be known as the Box-Board Division. With the growing importance of packaging as an implement of sales and distribution it was felt that the establishment of its own boxboard mill was an important step. This made Interstate a completely integrated operation.

Improvement in offices and an addition to the converting plant were completed in 1954 at Middletown and three years later saw the modernization and expansion of the Miamisburg Box Board Division.

## MISCELLANEOUS GROUP

Riverside Concrete Company came into the Middletown industrial picture in 1945, with incorporation 3 years later. In 1956 the company took the Brikrete franchise and began the manufacture of fine cement bricks for industrial and home use. Concrete, cinder and anlite blocks used in residential, commercial and highway construction are sold within a 10 mile radius of Middletown.

In 1954 Middletown Paving Products came to Middletown. This company is a leading local producer of blacktop, the bituminous paving material so widely used in highway construction. This company sells blacktop to government road building agencies as well as to construction companies for private drives and roads. This plant is strictly a production plant, with materials being sold to numerous road contractors.

American Materials Corporation, a subsidiary of American Aggregates Corporation of Greenville, Ohio, began its Middletown operation in 1953. The company buys slag, a by-product of the blast furnaces of New Miami and Middletown to convert into a road building material. Expanded light-weight or air-cooled slag is produced. Both come to the plant in a molten stage. The slag is run through crushers and screens, where it is graded to size.

General Chemical is a division of the Allied Chemical Corporation, which owns a network of plants throughout the United States, one of which is located in Middletown. Here the plant manufactures one product for one purpose—liquid alum, which is important in paper making. It finds a market among the paper mills of the Miami Valley. The company also warehouses chemical pure acids and reagents, and genetron cylinders for distribution.

Starting in May 1957 as the Southern Printing Ink Corporation, in 1959 the company became Sinclair and Valentine, Division of American Marietta. The company specializes in the making of printing inks which are used for multiwall paper bags, and in the corrugated and folding box industry. This local organization ties in with the paper products industry of the Middletown area.

For 20 years Universal Industries was known as H. J. Etheridge and Associates, which did general machine shop work for local industries.

In April 1959 the local plant was sold, and reorganized. Today they will develop any new





product or new process which seems to have value. This organization will follow the new product through to the manufacturing stage. The company may set up a plant to manufacture the new item, or it may sell or license the device.

Yoder of Middletown was founded in 1930 at Hamilton, Ohio, being moved to this city in 1957 as a subsidiary of the Gardner Board and Carton Company. Yoder offers to printers, carton, fabricators, advertising agencies and other customers a full line of precision photo-engraving facilities for letterpress, offset, gravure and flexographic printing. With a million dollar investment, the company claims the finest graphic arts center that can be built. Fred A. Yoder, with years of experience in the business, is president.

Neighboring plants of interest to the Middletown area include Magnode Products, Inc. of Trenton, which produces magnesium and aluminum extrusion, and magnesium anode. Zee Tool and Die Company of Monroe does general machine shop work.

## SERVICE INDUSTRIES

### Middletown Ice and Coal Company

Despite the development of mechanical refrigeration, the Middletown Ice and Coal Company manufactures and sells large quantities of ice. The local company developed out of the Doty Ice Plant, which was well-known around the turn of the century. J. C. Doty became interested in the ice trade in the early 1880's. In 1896 he began the sale of coal.

Doty cut ice from his ponds located at the site of the present Fabricating Division, Armco. The ponds were shallow, covering several acres, for ice was seldom cut more than 14 inches thick. Water was taken from the canal. The ice was then packed in sawdust, which was one foot thick on the outside and straw was packed around the sawdust. Properly packed and stored, the ice would keep all summer. The retail price of ice changed, varying with the supply which depended upon the weather. Ice usually sold for 25 to 30 cents a hundred.

If the winter was not cold enough to cut ice, it had to be shipped from the north by canal or railroads. Since the housewife depended upon her cold cellar for refrigeration, the main market for commercial ice was butcher shops, saloons and confectionaries. Doty had three large ice houses and supplied about 6,000 tons yearly for the local trade. Other ice houses were also in operation, such as Sebalds, but much of this ice was exported by canal boat to Cincinnati.

Cutting ice from the ponds made the business dependent on weather. The water was not pure, nor the ice clear. A machine was finally invented to make ice. Doty installed the first such machine in his plant in 1897. It was a steam-driven machine which manufactured 10 tons of ice daily. In 1906 he bought his second machine which had a capacity of 60 tons daily.

In 1914 the plant, which was known as the Middletown Artificial Ice Company was sold and the company in a few years changed its name to the Middletown Ice and Coal Company. The sale of the plant in 1914 brought to Middletown as manager of the ice plant Jesse L. Glass, who served later as vice president and finally president of the company. Glass saw the industry develop from a small plant to a large organization. In 1943 Glass rebuilt the plant, putting in all new machinery.

### The Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company

Gas and electricity as needed by an industrial city are supplied by The Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company. The forerunners of this company have been discussed earlier. The Middletown Electric Light and Power Company had consolidated the gas and electric utility business. In 1915, this company was purchased by The Ohio Gas and Electric Company. Seeing the need to link the power facilities of the various towns in the area, the Ohio Company contracted to purchase power from The Union Gas and Electric Company of Cincinnati, and a line to connect Middletown was begun in 1916. With added available power to sell, The Ohio Gas and Electric Company expanded to neighboring communities. In 1925, The Ohio Gas and Electric Company sold its property to The Union Gas and Electric Company in Cincinnati. Today, Middletown is the headquarters for the Northern Division of The Cincinnati Gas and Electric Company.

The present company provides gas and electric service to southwestern Ohio and northern



Kentucky, an area of over 2,600 miles and containing 1,350,000 people. The capital investment of the company at this time exceeds \$390,000,000.

Electric power is generated at three steam generating plants located on the Ohio River, with a total capacity of 1,060,000 KW. Though the company is participating in projects pertaining to the electric generation from atomic energy there is no indication that any type of nuclear power reactor can be built during the near future to produce electricity economically competitive with that produced by conventional fuel. When the time comes, however, that electric power can be generated more efficiently from nuclear power, the company will utilize it.

Natural gas for the company's service area comes mostly from the Texas-Louisiana area, including gas from wells located underneath the Gulf of Mexico, and is shipped to this area through the facilities of several pipe line transmission companies. To provide additional gas supplies during periods of peak demand, the company has constructed an underground cavern at Todhunter Road, south of Middletown, for the storage of liquid propane. The cavern consists of a network of horizontal tunnels extending from the bottom of a verticle 42" shaft drilled to a depth of 330 feet through shale and limestone to a bed of impervious shale.

## The Story of Middletown Post 218 The American Legion

"Middletown, U.S.A." is one of the most recent community projects sponsored by Middletown Post 218, The American Legion. In undertaking the project upon approval of the Executive Committee, Post Commander Richard Leichty stated "we feel it is well worth our efforts to promote this book as a community service." Service to Community, State and Nation has over the years been a major objective of Post 218. This has been evident from the very beginning of the organization.

After signing an application for a chapter for a Post of the American Legion in October 1919, the charter applicants held their first meeting on November 19, 1919. An open meeting for all World War I veterans was called for the following month. This meeting took place at the Public Library. Officers were elected for the new post, which was later given the name Middletown Post 218, and E. H. Yetter became first commander. From this small beginning, Middletown Post was to grow to become Ohio's largest post with over 2000 members.

At first the Legion Home consisted of rented quarters, but the growing organization soon saw the need for a permanent headquarters and activity building. Within a few years, the new organization had become part of the Middletown scene, backing one fine community project after another. As part of the "Million Dollar Community Fund" the citizens of Middletown planned to provide a home for the Legion. At first it was thought that rooms could be provided in the Civic Association Building, but membership of the Legion and its services increased so rapidly that a separate building became a necessity.

Such a home was found in a stately old mansion at 116 South Main Street. Constructed in 1862 as the home of Captain Robert Wilson, this fine Middletown landmark became the center of Legion and community activities. In fact in a recent year almost 70 other local organizations made use of the many facilities of the building. Its new auditorium contains space for 700. Other facilities include kitchen, game rooms, tap room, recreation room, reading rooms and offices. Located in the building are the Veterans Service Center, an agency of the Civic Association, Selective Service Board, Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force Recruiting Offices and other offices as space and need dictates.

The home was a gift to the Legion by the people of Middletown through the Civic Association. In the presentation of the building, George M. Verity, then president of the Civic

It is a fact that the American people are not yet fully informed of the true situation in the world.

From a total population of 150,000,000 in 1927, the American people are now a total population of 150,000,000 in 1928. The American people are now a total population of 150,000,000 in 1929. The American people are now a total population of 150,000,000 in 1930.

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## THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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Association, stated, "the grounds and building . . . are dedicated to your use; they are for you to have, to hold, and to enjoy just as long as a Middletown Chapter of the American Legion continues to exist . . ." He closed by saying, "Your organization represents the great backbone of American citizenship."

Legion headquarters became such an important part of the Middletown community, that one national magazine referred to it as "Heartbeat House." The year 1960 saw a complete renovation of Legion facilities with a Civic Association appropriation to modernize the plant. This further improved its value to the community.

Community Service, a watch word with the Legion, has many times joined hands with various Americanism projects. First of these was the famous Armistice Day parade in 1921, when communistic tendencies throughout the nation made counter efforts necessary. From an early date the Post took active interest in the Naturalization Class first conducted by Armco, and the Naturalization Court sessions at Hamilton. At the court, the Legion committee welcomed the new citizens and invited them to receptions and parties at the Legion home. The "American Citizens Club" was a direct result of this effort, and did much to aid the cause of Americanism in Middletown. With this group the American Legion sponsored "I Am An American Day" which became a widely celebrated patriotic holiday during the 1940's. National leaders spoke during the Middletown programs, which were broadcast over Cincinnati Radio Stations.

When the Fresh Air Camp was started for children with tubercular contacts, the American Legion constructed a 50 bed unit, and later added playground equipment at the camp. The Legion also constructed a unit of three cottages at Boy Scout Camp.

It was in 1928 that Post 218 saw the need for a better recreation program for boys. The Legion Junior Baseball program was started in Middletown with a four team league providing a supervised program for boys under 17, furnishing managers, coaches, finances and the cheering section. This was open to all boys in the community, not confined to sons of the Legion. Early in its history the Legion began sponsorship of a Boy Scout Troop and then added the Explorer's group. Three Girl Scout troops meet in the Legion Home.

1936 saw the first Boys' State, which was held in Columbus at the Fair Grounds. Middletown took part in this project by sending two boys, and this number has since been increased many times. This is an experience in citizenship that the boys never forget. The same year saw the beginning of the annual American Legion Essay Contest. Today the Post continues these programs as well as Student Citizenship Awards, Girl's State participation, Junior Golf Tournaments, Christmas parties, Sons of the Legion, and many other valuable youth projects. The Legion sees the future of America in its youth, and has been a true friend of Middletown's young people.

When the United Nations seemed in danger of failing in its mission, two young Legionnaires originated in Middletown the "Quota Force" plan, which proposed the strengthening of this world-wide organization. This brought national attention to our need for backing the U.N. Out of this developed a permanent committee, which led to the establishment of Middletown's famous "Know Your Candidates Town Meeting" an attempt to increase interest in better citizenship.

The list of community service activities is too long to enumerate. Some other outstanding ones are: contributions to projects of the Civic Association, contributions for underprivileged youth, complete modernization and redecoration with new equipment of the men's ward at the Middletown hospital, purchase of a home for a second Post, blood donorship and service with the Auxiliary Unit of the State Highway Patrol.

Post 218 has always stressed programs of spreading Americanism in the community. Long a bitter enemy of communistic influences, the Legion carried out an intensive educational campaign to alert local citizens to the dangers of this evil doctrine.

The Constitution of the Legion provides for members: "To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great War; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."

In the language of the Legion this means service, welfare, and rehabilitation. It has been



the mission of the Legion to see that the veteran and his family is not forgotten. For many soldiers with great disabilities, confined to life in a veteran's hospital, the war will never end. For these men the local post has provided picnics and have seen that each local veteran in hospitals throughout America is remembered each year with a Christmas box. Local needy veteran's families are provided with a Christmas basket. Parties have been sponsored at the Soldiers and Sailors Orphans' Home at Xenia.

In 1925 Edward A. Lampe became Post Service Officer, and Director of the Veterans' Service Center. This meant that Middletown area veterans had a trained counselor at their call, free of charge. All veteran affairs were cleared through this office. No problem was too large or too small for consideration and action. The Veteran's Service Center has brought hundreds of thousands of dollars into Middletown in the nature of payments to wounded, ill and distressed Veterans.

When World War II ended, the center had to be greatly expanded. After the veteran had contacted his Selective Service Board upon discharge, he was referred to the Service Center. Upon his arrival at the Center, the first step was to obtain his discharge papers so that they could be recorded by the County Recorder. If he had disabilities, the Center would care for the filing of claims, and follow each claim through the Veterans' Administration Office. Insurance payments were handled through this office. The veteran was informed of his re-employment rights. If he were interested in starting a business, he met with the Business Advisory Committee, and if finances were needed, he was referred to the Finance Committee. The Service Center also made arrangements and applications for the many benefits under the famous G.I. Bill.

With the increased membership due to eligible World War II veterans, the Legion Home added a fine new facility, Kessler Auditorium, which was dedicated in March, 1945.

The new veteran was welcomed to the established Post. When he signed up, he was given the choice of working on any of 37 committees, plus many special and subcommittees. Here he found the opportunity and challenge of working for civic improvement programs, youth projects, veterans assistance, or social activities, all within the framework of the Legion organization. By the 1960's the veterans of World War II and the Korean War had come into positions of leadership.

Today American Legionnaires of Post 218 may be found in every phase of community life: in government and civic affairs, in business and industry, in charity and social activities.

In the 1950's the Legion added to its prestige by participating in many valuable projects. Francis Carmody, then Chairman of the City Commission, in a letter dated April 26, 1957 praised the local Legionnaires for "their aid to the City Commission in obtaining new highways and approaches to the city; the building of a home for a veteran paraplegic as well as newer projects, like spearheading the creation of a county park system; and the current assistance to the Director of Parks on Knothole baseball, Pee Wee football, and the Junior Gold Tournament." "These projects," he said, "have made the Legion a vital part in the city's civic program."

But the most impressive project, Carmody described in this way, "Perhaps their finest gift has been the creation of Little Arlington in Woodside Cemetery. To those who have lost loved ones in the struggle for freedom, this memorial cemetery has become a symbol; a symbol of nearness, even though some of the men whose names appear on crosses still lie far across the seas."

Since 1946 the Post has conducted hundreds of military funeral services. Through the efforts of Legionnaire Joe R. Cox every veteran's grave has been located and marked. Every Memorial Day each soldier is honored. This, too, is an important unique function of the Legion.

Since 1919 The American Legion has grown in stature and prestige in Middletown. Through hundreds of projects it has made Middletown a better place to live and work. From "Heartbeat House" it will continue to serve the "City with a Soul."

Note: Material in this chapter was based upon original reports written by E. A. Lampe and George Denny.





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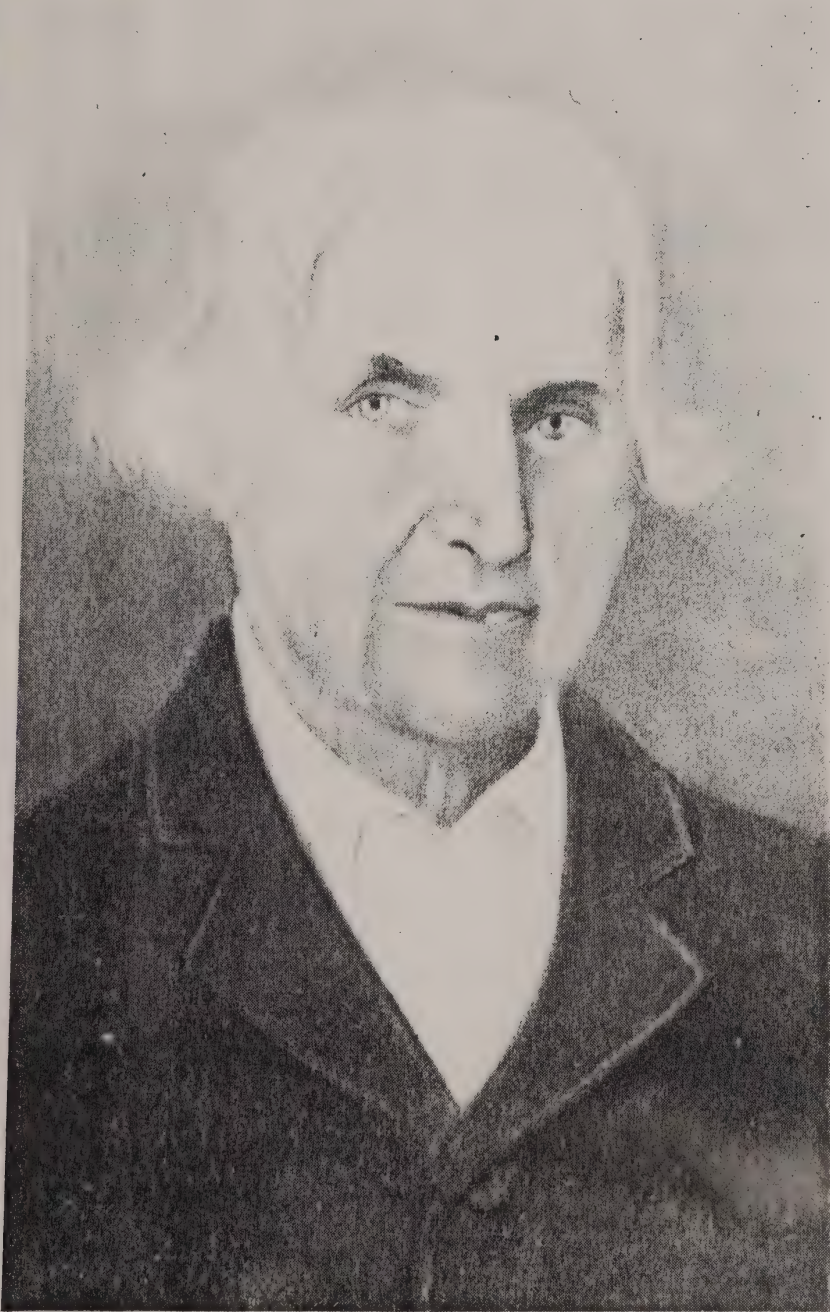
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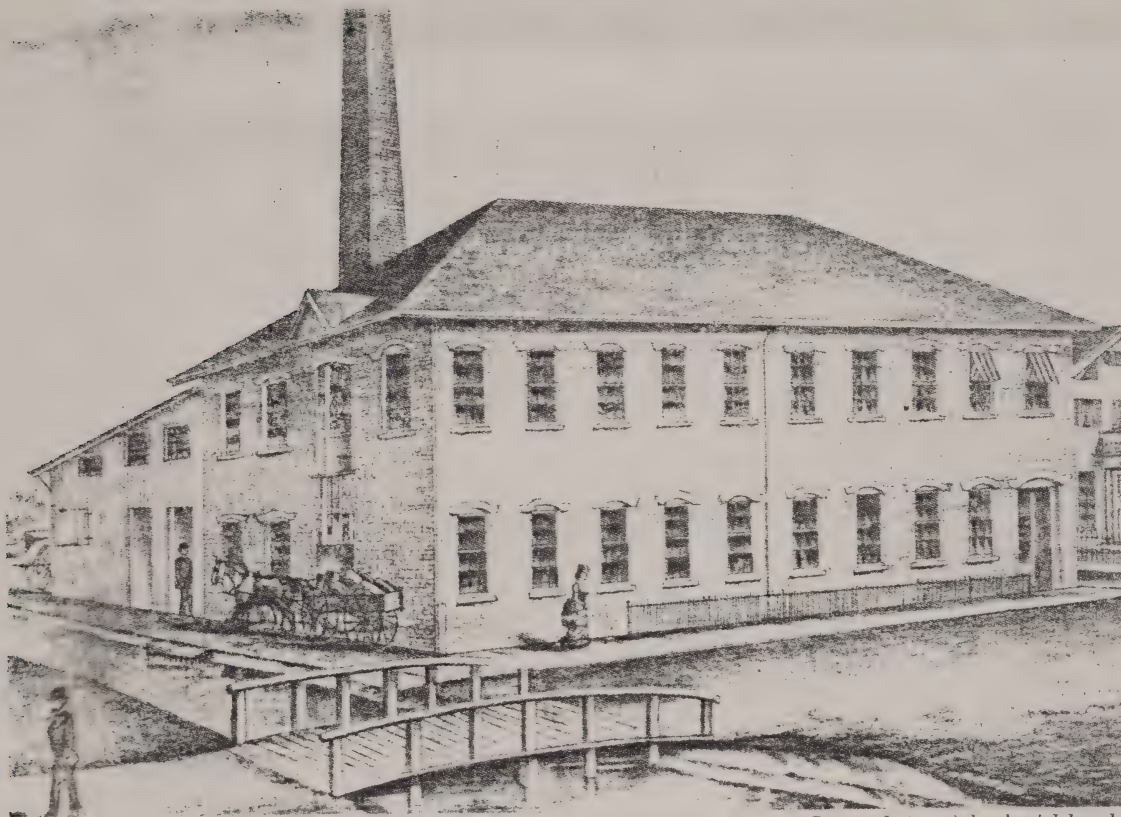
Middletown Album



Daniel Doty, Father of Middletown.







The Tytus-Gardner Paper and Manufacturing Company on Third Street (now Central Ave.) looked like this in 1875.





The old downtown Paper mills are now consolidated into Sorg Paper Company.

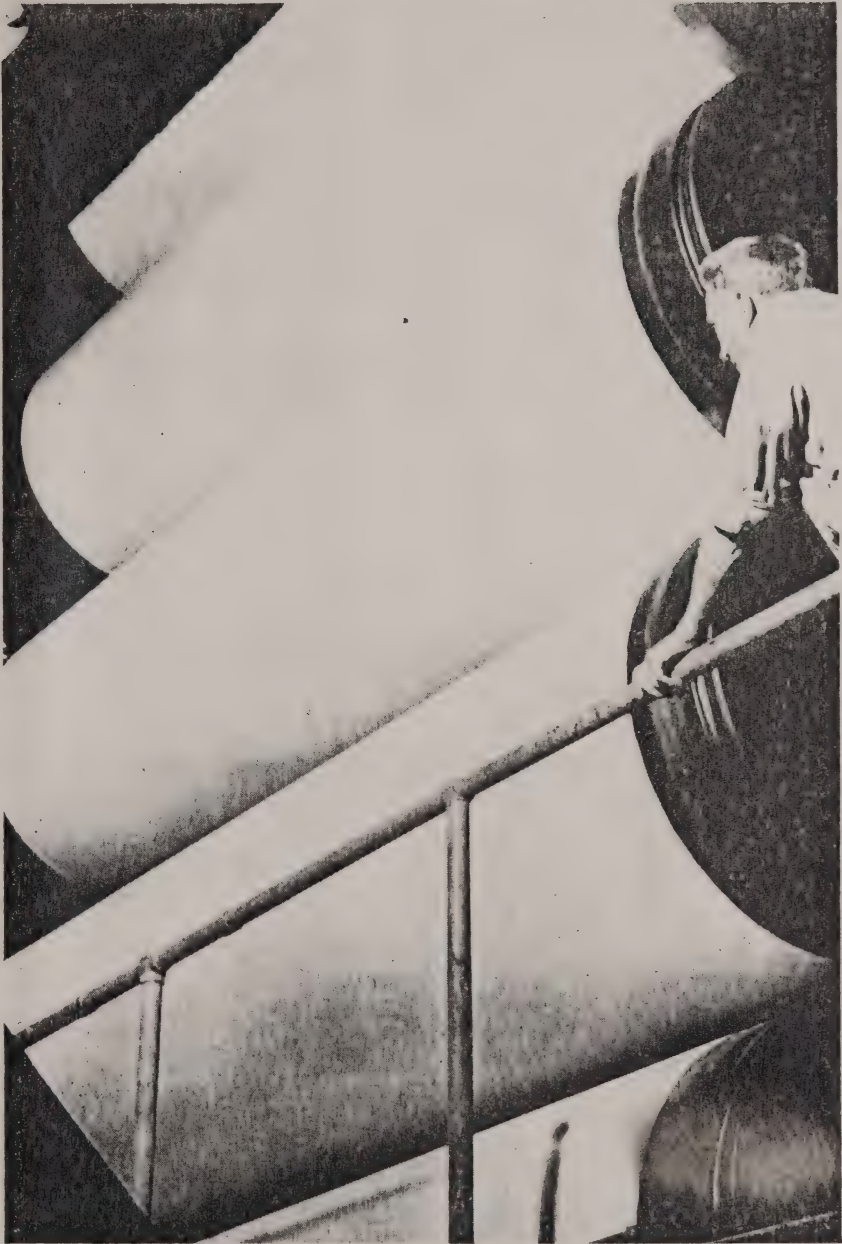




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ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



Middletown Album



Formerly the Paper Town, Paper remains our second industry.  
Photo shows making of Boxboard at Diamond National.





Aerial view of Diamond National's Middletown plant on Charles Street shows general office building (foreground), carton plant (center) and Mill II (rear).









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1890

Oglesby-Barnitz Bank and Trust Co.



1850

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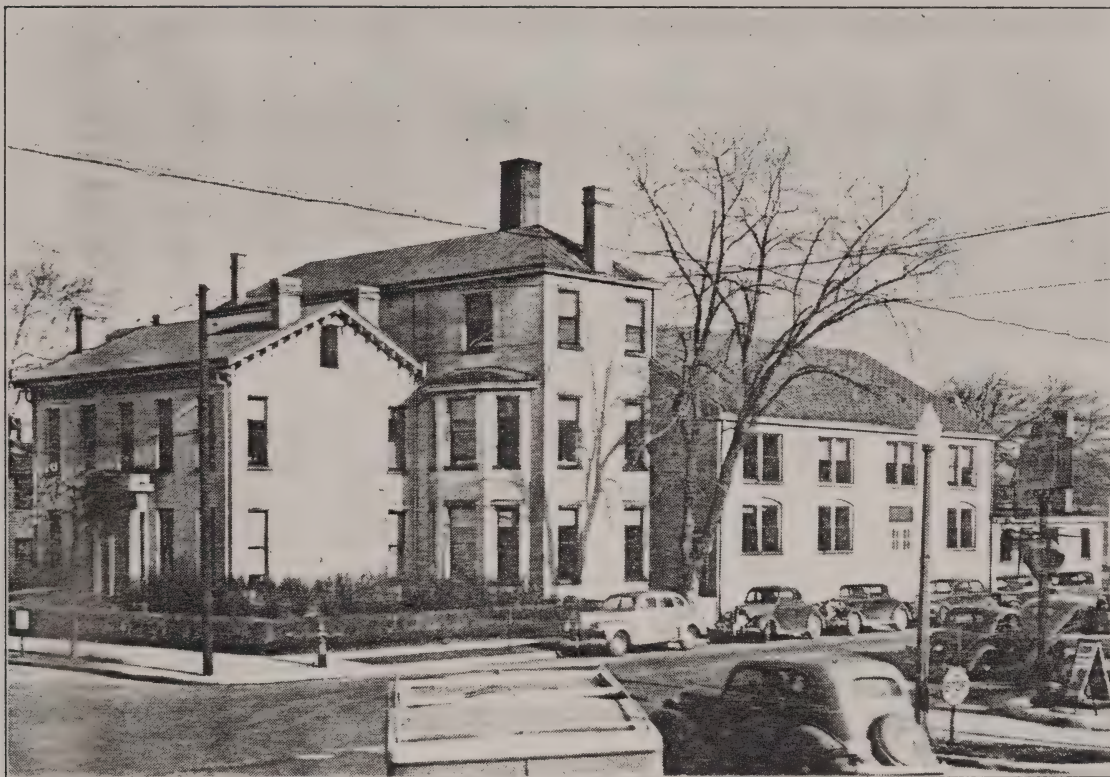




Middletown's Public Library opened in 1915.



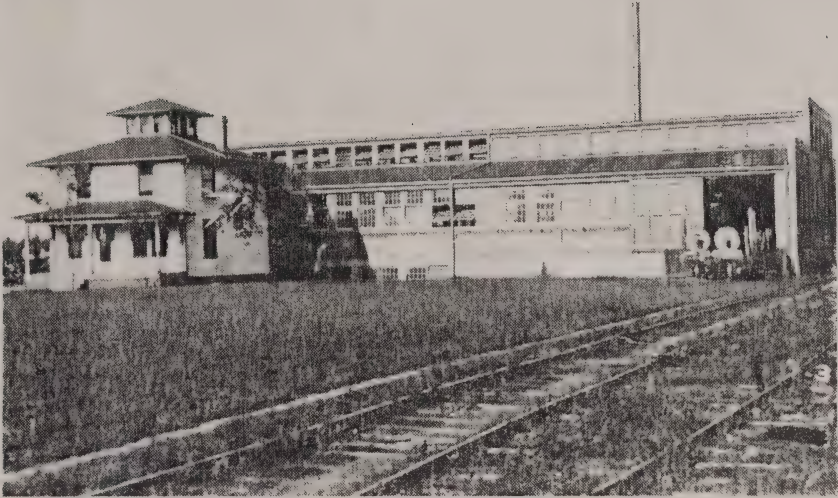




The Civic Association was first established here in 1925.



## Middletown Album



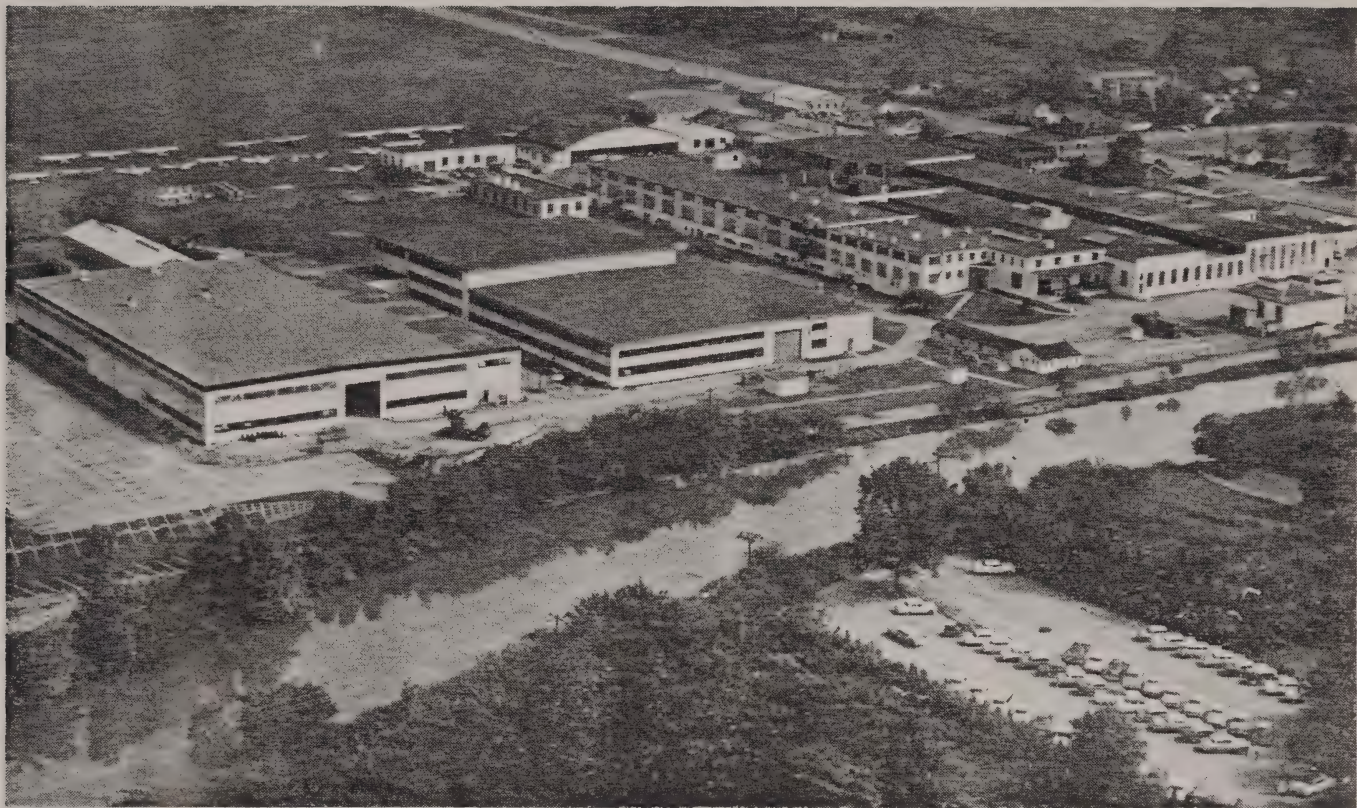
Shartles' Machine Shop in 1901



Black-Clawson, Shartle Division, 1960

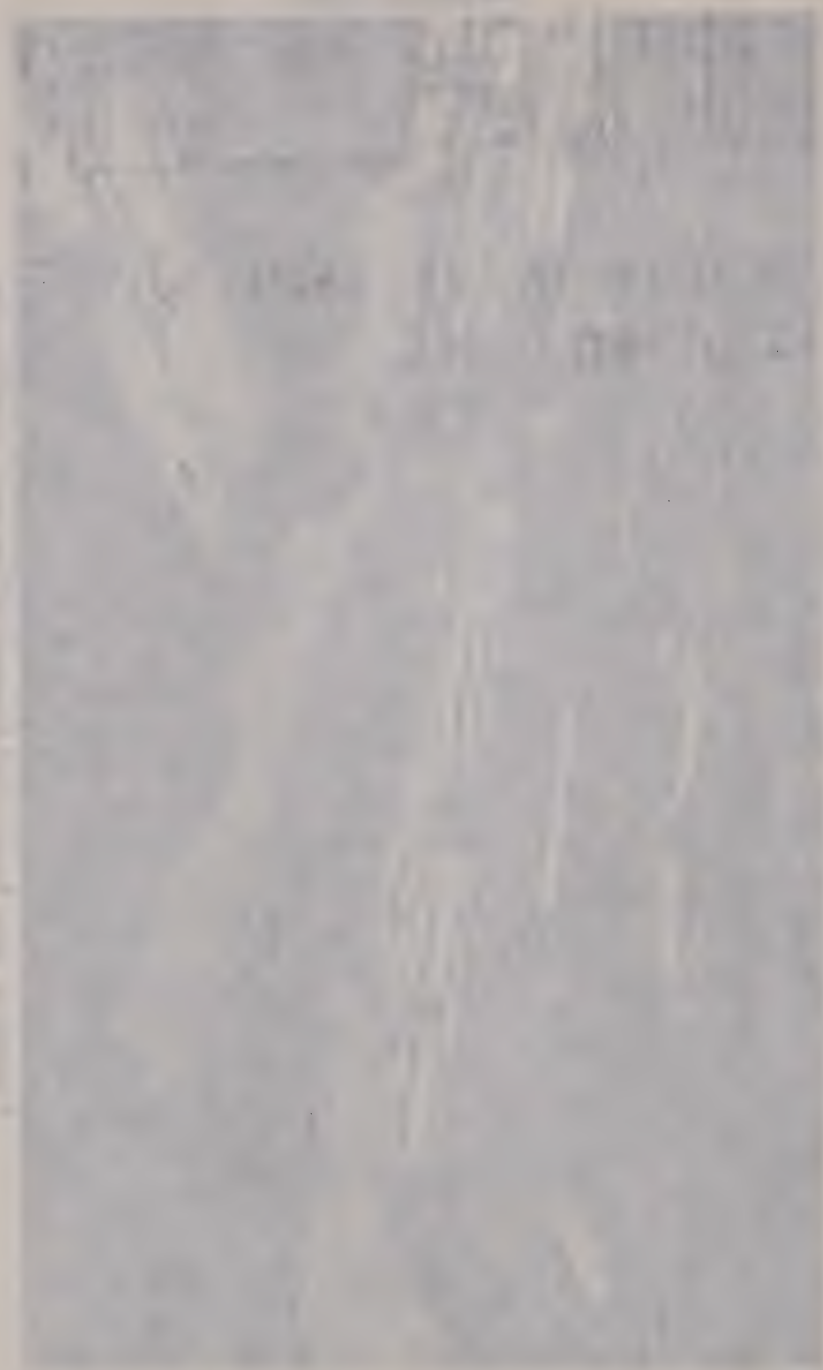






Middletown Album

Opening in 1940, Aeronca had increased its floor space 10-fold by 1960.



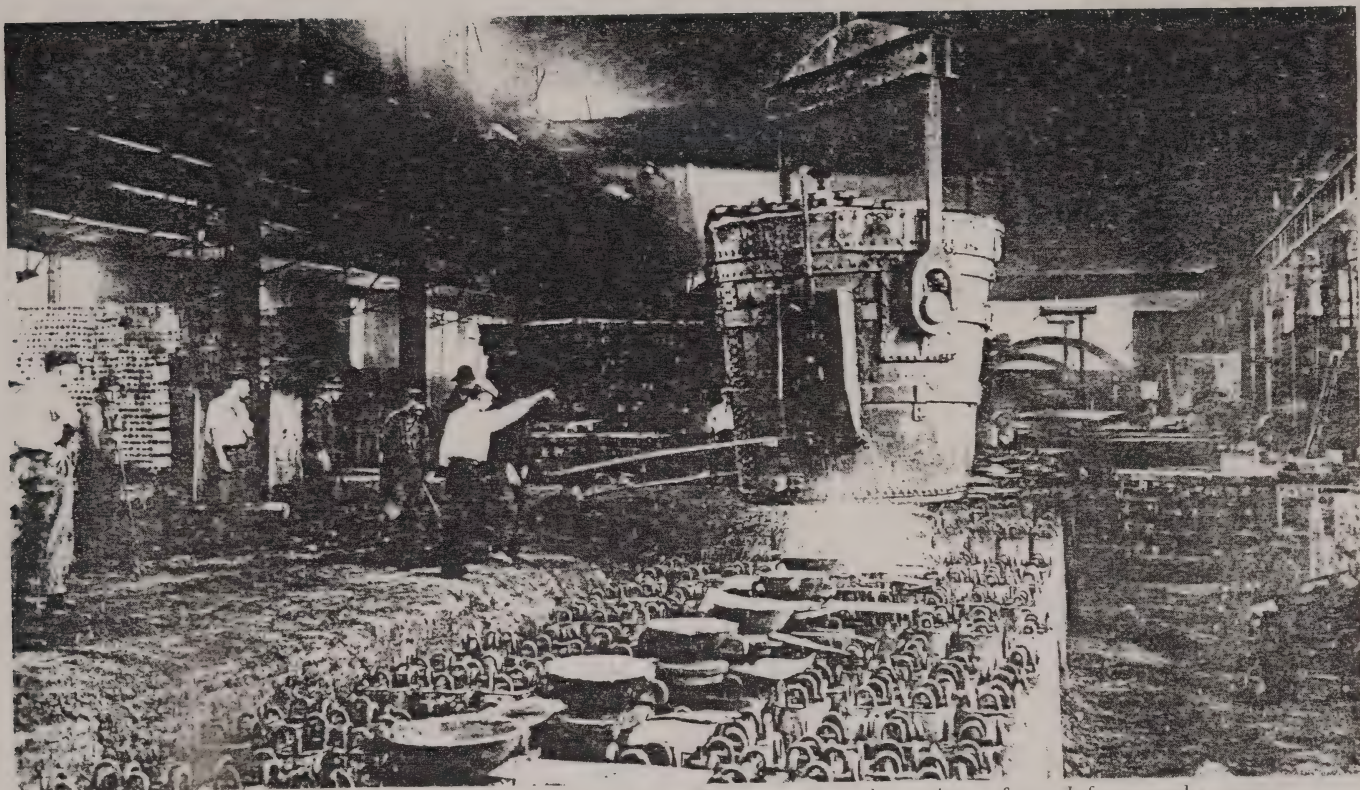




Armco was born in the horse and buggy days. With his coat off, George M. Verity starts Armco on its way.







Middletown Album

Pouring the first Armco Ingot Iron heat in 1908. The men in white shirts from left to right were Calvin Verity, Earl Emerson, Gus Ahlbrandt, and Charles R. Hook.

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### THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

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Laying the corner stone of the East Side Works, Middletown in 1910, which turned the cornfields into a great steel plant.

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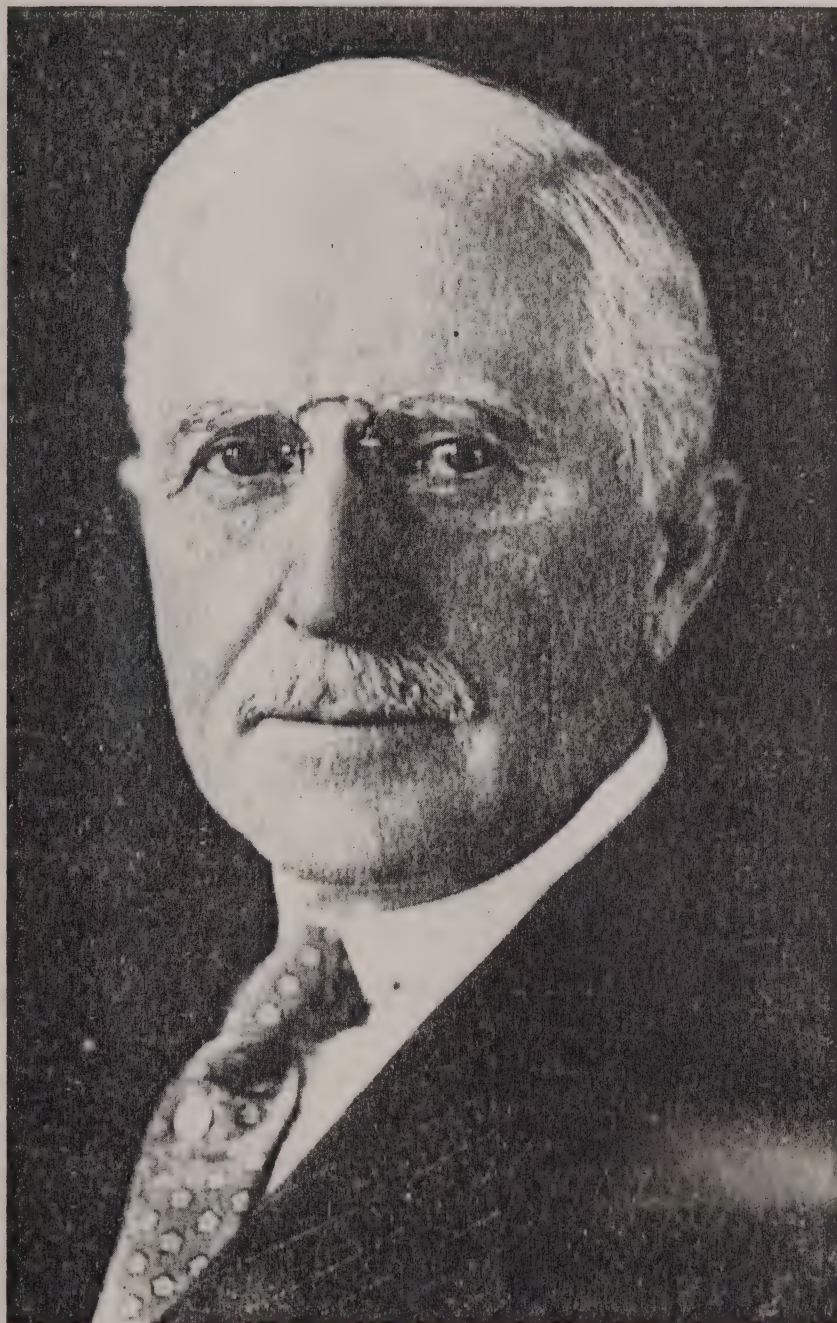


Middletown Album

The Armco Band, under Conductor Frank Simon, was a welcome radio visitor in the homes of America over a period of 12 years.







George M. Verity, Leader of Industrial Middletown.





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